

housing • affordable • Fair Housing Law Project • choice
Health Legal Services • justice • access • health • holistic
voice • Legal Advocates for Children & Youth • rights
empowerment • Mental Health Advocacy Project • respect
advocacy • Public Interest Law Firm • impact • civil rights



2012-2017 STRATEGIC PLAN



INTRODUCTION

As the Law Foundation of Silicon Valley approaches its 39th year, we set out in this document our strategy for 2012-2017.

During the 2007-2012 strategic planning period, the organization grew by 33% with the addition of a state contract for Legal Advocates for Children & Youth to provide legal services to children in the dependency system. The Law Foundation's \$7 million budget now serves the legal needs of over 6000 of the most vulnerable people in Silicon Valley every year. Despite the Law Foundation's explosive growth in 2009, the subsequent extraordinary economic climate has challenged the Law Foundation to meet the needs of those we serve while living within available funding. It has also created even greater urgency for services, particularly in the areas of housing, debt, and economic stability.

The Law Foundation's strengths to date have been our devotion to the highest quality legal services, successful impact advocacy, population-based legal services models, innovative collaborative initiatives, integration of social work and legal services, entrepreneurial responsiveness to the legal needs of the community, and an excellent reputation within the legal and client communities. The Law Foundation's vision for the next five years will capitalize on this already strong footing to strengthen infrastructure, create a research-based response to community needs and measurement of that response's effectiveness, enlarge our pro bono resources, and strategically grow our programs.

The development of the Law Foundation's strategic plan has been a collaborative and facilitated process, including extensive interviews and focus groups with key external stakeholders; comprehensive surveying of our board and staff; convening of Board and staff retreats; and numerous meetings of work teams that were responsible for drafting the strategic objectives for each initiative.

The role of the strategic plan is to articulate the Law Foundation's goals over the next five years; the strategic initiatives are broad statements of the goals the organization wants to achieve and the objectives are the means by which we plan to achieve them. The strategic plan does not identify all activities the programs of the Law Foundation will undertake. It includes for the most part only those activities that are new, or existing activities that will be modified or expanded. It also is expected to be reviewed dynamically and amended over time to reflect changes in the environment and the evolution of best practices.

We thank those who have been involved in creating this plan, particularly the members of the work teams, who spent many hours over many months, outside of their regular job duties, considering thoughtfully and lovingly the future of this organization and the communities it serves.

Jim Bower
Executive Director

Vicki Veenker
Chair, Board of Directors

Howard Clowes
Chair, Strategic Planning Committee

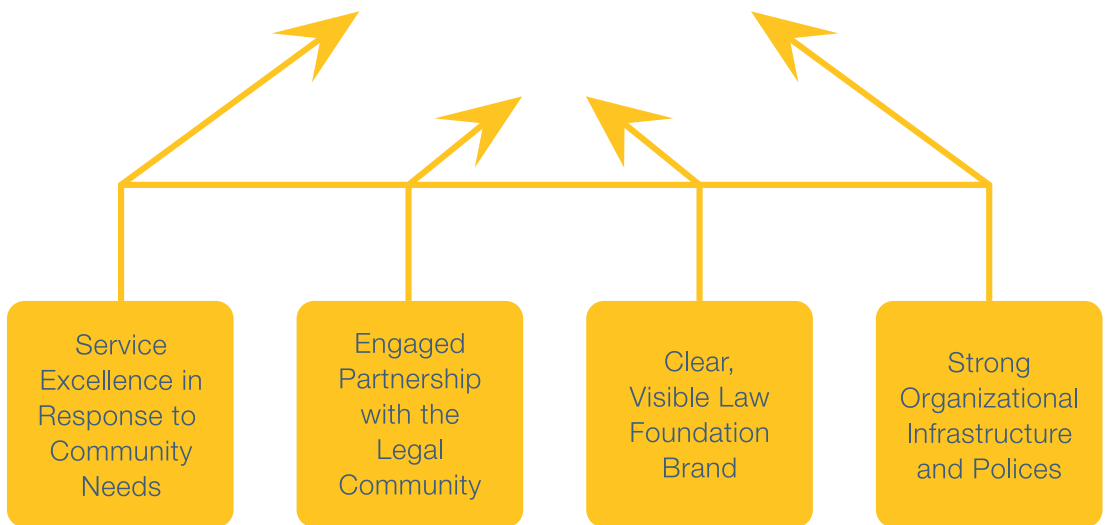
OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Vision

To achieve social justice in Silicon Valley and beyond through vigorous legal advocacy.

Mission

The Law Foundation of Silicon Valley advances the rights of under-represented individuals and families in our diverse community through legal services, strategic advocacy, and educational outreach



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1

Service Excellence in Response to Community Needs

Providing the overarching strategic direction for the Law Foundation's direct services programs, this strategic initiative will focus on capitalizing on our strengths to most effectively meet the many legal needs of our diverse community. We seek to increase the Law Foundation's impact within our core service areas through an emphasis on measuring and continuing to improve the quality of our services. At the same time, our efforts will focus on leading a comprehensive assessment to examine the need for affordable legal services in our region. The last comprehensive assessment of unmet legal needs in Santa Clara County took place in 2001, and significant changes in our economy, government and private sector funding, community, and social safety net since that time prescribe an updated and comprehensive assessment. In years two and beyond, we anticipate potential expansion to new service areas or geographies, informed by the findings of the comprehensive needs assessment and clear decision-making criteria.

As tenures of the Law Foundation's attorney staff have lengthened—with attorneys at the 5, 10, 15, and even 20-year levels—expertise in numerous legal practice areas has measurably deepened; we plan to leverage our marketing plan to more regularly and publicly highlight our staff's thought leadership and to bring this expertise to bear on the larger social justice issues of the day.



OBJECTIVES

1. Lead a comprehensive assessment of the need for affordable legal services in our region, including identification of unmet needs, and adjust our strategic action planning accordingly.
2. Explore opportunities to expand services based on existing and emerging needs, core competencies, and financial sustainability.
3. Implement an organization-wide program evaluation system to track outputs, analyze outcomes, and monitor service quality.
4. Proactively seek opportunities to promote and share the knowledge and expertise of Law Foundation staff.
5. Increase the influence of the Law Foundation on state and national levels.

Strategic Initiative 1-1

Service Excellence – Fair Housing Law Project



FHLP Mission

To ensure that all people may freely choose a place to live without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, source of income, operation of a licensed daycare, disability, or whether they have children in their family.

The staff of our two litigation programs, Fair Housing Law Project and Public Interest Law Firm, have always worked collaboratively on numerous housing-related litigation and advocacy projects; over the past four years, this collaboration has evolved into shared staff and overlapping missions and goals. The Law Foundation plans to assess a potential “merger” of these two programs, to determine whether creating a unified program will create opportunities and advantages in staffing flexibility and increased agility in responding to the need for new services. It will also determine whether those advantages outweigh any potential disruptive loss of branding, reputation, or focus.

FHLP plans to expand beyond its nationally-acknowledged work in the predatory mortgage lending and housing discrimination arenas to the areas of habitability problems, rights violations in care homes, and systemic housing discrimination. This plan reflects both the impetus behind evaluating a FHLP/PILF merger and FHLP’s determination to stay nimble in response to community needs and to address community problems in systemic and systematic ways.

OBJECTIVES

1. Work with PILF to evaluate, design, and establish broader anti-slumlord program, including litigation against chronic slumlords.
2. Evaluate, design, and establish broader residential care and nursing home rights program.
3. Increase staffing time for under-served South Santa Clara County (Gilroy and Morgan Hill), particularly in lending and fair housing matters.
4. Expand focus on systemic and structural housing discrimination.
5. FHLP and PILF will evaluate a merger in year 1 and implement in year 2, if it is determined appropriate and beneficial for the mission of the Law Foundation and the work of the two programs.

Strategic Initiative 1-2

Service Excellence—Health Legal Services

The hallmark of Health Legal Services (formerly AIDS Legal Services) and its sister program Mental Health Advocacy Project is our highly-respected and effective model of embedding teams of skilled attorneys and advocates in the local systems of health care and mental health care, respectively. These two programs are currently jointly managed and share attorney staff.

We have long recognized that this service delivery model would be helpful to other low income populations with chronic illnesses. This is especially true in light of the vast changes approaching in health care delivery and the social safety net and an increasing understanding of how legal interventions can successfully address the social determinants of health. Thus, HLS adopts the bold initiative to greatly expand Health Legal Services to reach and serve our community members living with a spectrum of chronic care needs, using cutting-edge service delivery models—including creative uses of technology—that get legal assistance to the most people in efficient, accessible and effective ways.

OBJECTIVES

1. Build HLS into a robust health-related legal services program in order to serve more populations living with chronic illnesses through cutting-edge, successful service delivery models.
2. Explore staffing medical-legal partnerships with trained law students and pro bono attorneys.
3. Track implementation of the Affordable Care Act and serve in a technical assistance capacity to service providers and consumers.
4. Maximize management and staff resources across HLS and MHAP programs to serve clients efficiently and effectively, while evaluating a merger; then implement the merger if it is determined appropriate and beneficial for the mission of the Law Foundation and the work of the two programs.



HLS Mission

To remove barriers to health stability and secure justice by providing comprehensive legal services to individuals living with chronic or life-threatening health conditions.

Strategic Initiative 1-3

Service Excellence—Legal Advocates for Children & Youth



LACY Mission

To advance the legal rights of children and youth, empowering them to lead healthy and productive lives.

The theme of the strategic objectives of Legal Advocates for Children & Youth is management of growth so that we can achieve our goals of using the best practice models, exercising leadership in the child advocacy community and, most importantly, delivering excellent services to our clients. Just three years ago, LACY took hold of an exciting opportunity to significantly expand our services which, in turn, required the organization to increase in staff, develop internal systems for supervision, and to take on new advocacy roles in the community. LACY recognizes the need for continued and rigorous monitoring of growth impact. LACY's focus on enhancing staff supervision and interdisciplinary practice are integral components of managing our growth long-term.

The need for measurements for demonstrating the quality of service provided by legal services organizations, generally, and child welfare organizations, specifically, is an issue being tackled beyond the walls of the Law Foundation; recently, a major university embarked upon a multi-year study to develop measurements for child welfare attorneys. Many of LACY's objectives reflect our desire to expedite the development of meaningful and appropriate measurements to comprehensively assess service quality to best serve our clients and to facilitate funders in assessing our work.

OBJECTIVES

1. Create a system that allows clients to provide meaningful feedback on LACY services, practices, and programming.
2. Expand LACY's public policy program to include leadership in state and local public policy initiatives.
3. Strengthen attorney/social worker partnerships and collaboration to optimize service excellence.
4. Create a culture of feedback including improved and consistent supervision, observation, employee recognition, and professional development.
5. Implement logic models, illustrating LACY's current program design and creating measurable outcomes for evaluation and funding.

Strategic Initiative 1-4

Service Excellence—Mental Health Advocacy Project

Recent reductions in Mental Health Advocacy Project staffing have forced the elimination of some services, which has been felt in the client community. While not without adverse consequences, these cuts have renewed our focus on our core services in mental health patients' rights, housing, and disability benefits and prompted us to be even more efficient in delivering those services. Moving forward, we are determined to creatively seek resources—both financial and staffing—that will allow us to fill gaps in core services and to go deeper into systemic advocacy on particular issues.

Leveraging our alliances with the mental health consumer community is one way to both more meaningfully and resourcefully work toward these goals. For example, our plan to educate residential care operators about clients' rights and to enforce those rights will be done hand-in-hand with consumer-run self-help programs and volunteers. Additionally, involving consumers in setting MHAP priorities will focus our energies towards the most pressing needs of individuals with mental health disabilities.

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase consumer involvement in shaping MHAP priorities, and promote consumer empowerment and advocacy at individual and systemic levels.
2. Research and evaluate creative new funding resources for prioritized direct legal services as well as systemic advocacy.
3. Implement a rights education and advocacy program for those living in residential care.
4. Maximize management and staff resources across HLS and MHAP programs to serve clients efficiently and effectively, while evaluating a merger; then implementing the merger if it is determined appropriate and beneficial for the mission of the Law Foundation and the work of the two programs.



MHAP Mission

To empower people identified as having mental or developmental disabilities to live more independent, secure and satisfying lives through the enforcement of their legal rights and the advancement of their social and economic well-being.

Strategic Initiative 1-5

Service Excellence – Public Interest Law Firm



PILF Mission

To protect the human rights of individuals and groups in the Silicon Valley area who face barriers to adequate representation in the civil justice system, using impact litigation and advocacy.

While Public Interest Law Firm maintains a broad mission and wide-ranging priorities, it has specialized in a number of key legal practice areas in its impact litigation and advocacy over its lifetime, including affordable housing, habitability in housing, payday lending, mortgage lending, disability rights, inmate civil rights and voting rights. As this practice has evolved over the past decade, we have found that we are the most effective when we generate a long-term strategy for engagement within a particular arena, incorporating coalition-building, subject-area expertise, and legal and advocacy approaches. The development of a communications plan to disseminate information about PILF's work—to ensure that our work is understood, accessible, and funded and that our public advocacy is effectual—will add a powerful tool in this program's tool-box.

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify impact litigation and advocacy practice areas based on PILF expertise and community need, establish priority areas, and design a focused marketing program for each area.
2. Build on payday lending reform policy advocacy model, partnering with fellow nonprofits for community organizing, to develop a consumer rights policy and litigation program.
3. Evaluate, design, and establish an ongoing voting rights program.
4. Work with FHLP to evaluate, design, and establish broader anti-slumlord program, including litigation against chronic slumlords.
5. Develop and work to endow sponsored yearly impact litigation attorney fellowship to permanently staff impact litigation investigative work.
6. FHLP and PILF will evaluate a merger in year 1 and implement in year 2, if it is determined appropriate and beneficial for the mission of the Law Foundation and the work of the two programs.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2

Engaged Partnership with the Legal Community

The timing of the Law Foundation's strategic planning process fortuitously dovetailed with the creation of our pro bono coordinator position in 2011, a realization of our long-time goal of further advancing our pro bono program. Through the strategic planning process, the staff and Board adopted a unified vision for our pro bono program—one that reflects the cornerstones of the Law Foundation's success. With full integration in the Law Foundation's high quality legal services delivery system, our pro bono program will involve the same core values of our in-house legal programming: using our expertise and meaningful external partnerships to increase legal services access to communities in need.

OBJECTIVES

1. Ensure that as our pro bono program grows, we remain focused on the intersection between community need, Law Foundation expertise and pro bono partner interest.
2. Meaningfully engage legal community by offering interesting pro bono opportunities that enhance professional development and by providing volunteers with ongoing support that leads to a long-term connection with the Law Foundation.
3. Create a strong internal infrastructure to advance a highly integrated pro bono program that effectively employs program staff and is supported by well-designed systems and processes.
4. Engage and expand the network of early-career attorneys involved with the organization through Law Foundation-sponsored networking and educational opportunities.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3

Clear, Visible Law Foundation Brand



Marketing is a somewhat unfamiliar concept—or, at least, a lower priority in an environment of scarce resources—for many nonprofit organizations. However, marketing, and now online marketing, is a key way to cultivate support, satisfy donor needs, reflect the worth and legitimacy of an organization, and strengthen policy work. The Law Foundation’s marketing and communications strategy seeks to take the organization to a higher level of sophistication. Our website and collateral materials should consistently and effectively communicate useful information, community and organizational news, and events, and showcase the extraordinary work of the Law Foundation.

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop consistent and compelling brand messaging.
2. Increase the Law Foundation’s electronic presence.
3. Proactively and strategically develop press/media relationships.
4. Create an overall Law Foundation communications plan to identify and cultivate key audiences.
5. Staff a marketing position.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 4

Strong Organizational Infrastructure and Policies

Since our founding in 1974, the Law Foundation has grown significantly in both scope and size. In 2009, the Law Foundation experienced major growth when our Legal Advocates for Children & Youth program was awarded a large state contract and the organization grew from 50 to 75 staff members. With such a significant increase in staff, the Law Foundation has seen changes in both organizational culture and the efficiency of internal organizational systems and operations.

The strategic plan provides an opportunity to evaluate internal systems, policies and practices with a goal of ensuring that internal operations are maturing and developing in a manner appropriate to the growth in size of the Law Foundation, while attempting to preserve the unique culture of the organization.



OBJECTIVES

1. Institute a management system in which all staff are supported in achieving their individual performance and professional development plans.
2. Attract and retain highly qualified staff to achieve our organization's mission.
3. Systematize consistent and efficient internal communications, including using technology.
4. Ensure consistent and coordinated decision-making across the organization.
5. Build out our technological capabilities to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of staff and services.
6. Establish a succession plan for the organization's long-term leadership.
7. Increase engagement and leadership opportunities for the Board of Directors, leveraging board members' expertise and interests.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 5

Financial Sustainability



In order to survive and thrive in today's competitive environment, nonprofit organizations must take a bold, creative look at their funding models. The Law Foundation is no exception. While the organization has benefited from a wide array of long-term government contracts and a generously supported annual dinner, we recognize the need for a much more diversified, proactive resource development strategy.

The Law Foundation's long-term financial sustainability will depend upon new grant opportunities supporting organization-wide initiatives, innovative new program-level grants and contracts, an expansion in individual giving beyond the annual dinner, and the introduction of an ambitious planned giving program. Our sustainability will be further reinforced by the active involvement of staff leaders in proactive financial management and strategic stewardship of our organization's resources.

OBJECTIVES

1. Institute a three-year budget planning process.
2. Expand revenue from foundation and corporate grants, including collaborative opportunities.
3. Establish a fund development department.
4. Create and implement a long-term fund development plan to expand and diversify unrestricted revenue, including planned giving.
5. Explore other forms of revenue including fees for service and technical assistance opportunities.
6. Ensure that all supervisory staff are fully trained on budgeting and financial management.



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