



ACLU of Ohio Strategic Plan (2025-2028): Fighting Back, Fighting Forward

We are in a defining moment for our democracy. Across the country – and here in Ohio – we are facing a coordinated assault on our freedoms and the rule of law that is our nation’s foundation. The ACLU was founded in 1920 to defend our civil liberties during a time of deep political repression and censorship. Today, that mission is more urgent and resonant than ever. The ACLU of Ohio is prepared to fight back, and fight forward, with clarity, courage, and an unwavering commitment to justice.

This 2025-2028 Strategic Plan is our blueprint for action to address these profound and escalating threats to our democracy. Together, with our partners, neighbors, and allies, we work to fulfill this deeper promise: that every person – no matter their background or beliefs – can live with dignity, safety, and freedom, free from government overreach.

Vision

The ACLU of Ohio envisions a just and equitable Ohio where all people are fairly represented in a strong democracy, unoppressed by racism, and are able to live their fullest lives.

Mission

To champion and expand constitutional and other fundamental rights and to pursue racial, economic, gender, and social equity for all Ohioans using all the tools of integrated advocacy without political partisanship; to fight in both principle and practice for the best ideals of fairness, freedom, and justice; and to advance our mission through an anti-racist, intersectional lens with determination, agility, practicality, and hope.

Values

We fight for fairness, freedom, and justice.

We are anti-racist.

We have a non-partisan commitment to the Constitution.

We lead with integrity.

We utilize integrated advocacy.

Four Priority Issue Areas

ENGAGED DEMOCRACY

We envision an Ohio where every eligible person can fully participate in a vibrant democracy, where every vote counts, every voice matters, and fair representation is the norm.



WE WILL

- Grow a bigger tent for civic engagement;
- Combat voter suppression.

INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS AND DIGNITY

We envision an Ohio where every person has the freedom and power to make deeply personal decisions about their body, health, and future, free from political interference, stigma or discrimination.



WE WILL

- Assert and protect the humanity and rights of our LGBTQIA+ community and trans neighbors;
- Protect and advance reproductive freedom.

SMART JUSTICE

We envision an Ohio where justice means dignity, fairness, and safety for all – where no one is punished for being poor, and communities are strengthened by care, not cages.



WE WILL

- Reduce the harms associated with the criminalization of poverty;
- Reduce the number of people in prisons and jails;
- Advocate for death penalty repeal and champion clemency;
- Reduce the number of youth funneled into the juvenile legal system;
- Protect against governmental overreach that infringes on personal privacy.

FREE SPEECH, FREE COUNTRY

We envision an Ohio where every person – including immigrants – can speak, learn, and question freely – where the First Amendment is not just protected, but powerfully alive in classrooms, communities, and public life.



WE WILL

- Defend the right to free speech, expression, and inquiry;
- Partner with allies to nurture welcoming communities and to protect immigrant communities from unlawful detention and deportation.

Strategic Organizational and Advancement Goals

We envision an ACLU build for impact – rooted in equity, powered by people, and equipped to win lasting change.

WE WILL

- Build capacity within Board and staff to engage meaningfully with diverse communities across Ohio;
- Diversify the team and strengthen the culture of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging (EDIB);
- Build the skills and consistent practice of cross-team collaborative planning and integrated advocacy;
- Increase and diversify our base of allies and supporters; grow our financial resources.