

ACLU of Ohio Foundation

*The Roadmap of Our Future:
Strategic Plan 2010-2015*

Introduction

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is our nation's guardian of liberty, working daily in courts, legislatures and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed to all people in this country by the Constitution and the laws of the United States.

In 1920, when the ACLU was founded by Roger Baldwin, Crystal Eastman, Albert DeSilver and others, civil liberties were in a sorry state. Activists were languishing in jail for distributing anti-war literature. Foreign-born people who were suspected of political radicalism were subject to summary deportation. Racial segregation was the law of the land and state sanctioned violence against African Americans was routine. Constitutional rights for the gay community, the poor and many other groups were virtually unthinkable. Moreover, the U.S. Supreme Court had yet to uphold a single free speech claim under the First Amendment.

Since the ACLU's founding in 1920, the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization has grown from a roomful of civil liberties activists to an organization of nearly 400,000 members and supporters, with offices in almost every state. The ACLU has also maintained, since its founding, the position that civil liberties must be respected, even in times of national emergency. In support of that position, the ACLU has appeared before the Supreme Court and other federal courts on numerous occasions, both as direct counsel and by filing amicus briefs.

The ACLU of Ohio Foundation ("Ohio ACLU") is an affiliate of the National ACLU. An outgrowth of the Youngstown Workers Defense League, the Ohio organization was founded in 1920 as one of the first fifteen affiliates of the National organization. The Ohio ACLU has gone through many transformative periods in the past 90 years. Today, as in previous decades, the Ohio ACLU strives to preserve and protect civil liberties through its award-winning educational and outreach programs, its litigation of cutting edge constitutional rights issues, and its lobbying for legislative change to protect the rights of all people residing in Ohio, especially those who are powerless to protect themselves.

As the economic, political, legal and social landscapes continue to change at the national and state levels, the Ohio ACLU must be prepared to confront yet unrealized threats and embrace new opportunities as they arise. This Strategic Plan provides stability by building on our past successes while also charting a creative course for the future development of this organization.

Executive Summary

This Strategic Plan recognizes that there are five vital areas critical to the success of the Ohio ACLU. Each area is explained briefly below. The boundaries between the categories sometimes overlap but there is no doubt that attention to each area is necessary for the Ohio ACLU to remain a dynamic, engaged and relevant force in preserving and protecting civil liberties.

Public Policy/Technology/Communications: Transition the education and communication departments into a public policy department that creates integrated and coordinated campaigns for civil liberties issues. By public policy efforts, we mean the promotion of ACLU positions using all available strategies to positively impact administrative, legislative, and policy outcomes.

Litigation/Legislation: A coordinated approach between the legal and lobbying functions on a more structured and strategic basis that enables the organization to use its resources most effectively to achieve ACLU objectives.

Leadership/Management/Organization: To identify, cultivate, recruit, and support leadership at all levels of the organization – board, staff, and at the grassroots level – that is visionary, provides direction and support for bold and innovative strategies, and anticipates statewide and national trends in non-profit management and social justice organizing.

Fiscal and Human Resources Management: Fiscal and human resources refers specifically to a) the ongoing management of ACLU of Ohio financial and material resources, and b) compensated staff who operate the ACLU of Ohio. Goals expressed in this plan include the achievement of a fiscal resources management plan that balances ongoing stability with a nimbleness to respond to unexpected situations; and maintain the ACLU of Ohio's diverse, well trained, and forward-thinking staff.

Development: Development refers to the ACLU of Ohio's comprehensive fundraising activities. The goals developed in this plan are designed to ensure the long-term vitality of philanthropic support for legal, education and advocacy programs, as well as general operations, through expanded and more sophisticated fundraising efforts

Finally, we affirm the Mission, Vision and Core Values as adopted in the 2003 Strategic Plan. These are:

ACLU's Mission: *To aid in maintaining and extending constitutional and other fundamental rights, liberties, privileges, and immunities, and to take all legitimate actions in furtherance of that object without political partisanship.*

ACLU's Vision: *We envision Ohio as a free, safe and just society where civil liberties are secure for all.*

ACLU's Core Values: *Respect, diversity, integrity, courage and justice*

Core Values

Core values are woven into our culture, and serve as the foundation in which the organization stands. They are fundamental to our sustainability and to our mission to aid in maintaining and extending constitutional and other fundamental rights, liberties, privileges, and immunities. The following are the American Civil Liberties Union's core values:

Respect

By this we mean...

- We respect the Rule of Law
- We value the rules, and work to ensure the rules are right for all
- We honor the people who enforce and live the law

Diversity

By this we mean...

- We honor collaboration with all staff, Board members, and leaders throughout the state chapters
- We value the diversity among all staff, Board members, and leaders
- We respect all cultures
- We take affirmative action to increase the diversity of our staff, Board, memberships, volunteers, and other constituents of the Ohio ACLU.

Integrity

By this we mean...

- We value the efficient stewardship of our resources
- We are committed to the thoughtful examination of cases
- We are dedicated to the promotion of civil liberties, and we take innovative approaches to protecting these liberties

Courage

By this we mean...

- We are on the cutting-edge with the concerns of civil liberties violations
- We are uncompromising in our pursuit to protect civil liberties
- We respect the law, but work to make the law satisfy the status quo

Justice

By this we mean...

- We are deeply committed to the promotion of constitutional and other fundamental rights, liberties, privileges, and immunities
- We are relentless in the pursuit of equality for all, especially those who are socially discarded and/or politically disenfranchised.
- We are accountable to our mission in preserving liberty for all

ACLU of Ohio
I. Public Policy/Technology/Communications

(Formerly known as Education, Communication, Technology, Field and Programming)

Goal Statement: Transition the education and communication departments into a public policy department that creates integrated and coordinated campaigns for civil liberties issues. By public policy efforts, we mean the promotion of ACLU positions using all available strategies.

1. Enhance Education Programming Activities

- 1a. Expand effectiveness of public policy efforts through the growth and development of trainings, train the trainer programs, and publications (whether print or electronic) which are reflective of both traditional and emerging civil liberties issues.
- 1b. Expand the departmental staff to broaden the reach and coordination of public policy campaigns in the areas of trainings, publications, and communication.
- 1c. Increase research capabilities to produce specific action campaigns and publications on a broader spectrum of civil liberties issues
- 1d. Institutionalize year round youth programming and opportunities (high school, undergraduate, and graduate level).
- 1e. Develop long-term campaign to explore and challenge the ways in which economically disadvantaged people and people of color face judicial inequities and treatment by the courts.

2. Effectively and Efficiently Utilize Communication Resources

- 2a. Plan for technology upgrades that support programs, engage members, and increase influence.
- 2b. Expand the use of social media and new communications vehicles to proactively engage current and potential members, broaden conceptual understanding of organization, and promote the availability of the organization as a resource on constitutional rights issues.

Sue Carter – Board Member
Shakya Diaz – Staff

With assistance from:
Steve Miller – Board Member
Jeff Miller – Staff

ACLU of Ohio
II. Litigation/Legislation

Goal Statement: A coordinated approach between the legal and lobbying functions on a more structured and strategic basis that enables the organization to use its resources most effectively to achieve ACLU objectives.

1. Enhance legal activities

- 1a. Regularly assess the opportunities to make progress on upcoming issues and plan how best to coordinate the use of litigation and advocacy resources.
- 1b. In setting strategy, take into account that in certain instances, we will be more successful in achieving our goals through developing constituencies and pursuing legislation than by pursuing litigation.
- 1c. Leverage resources through the building of strategic coalitions for both legal and advocacy efforts.
- 1d. Broaden internal and external perceptions of ACLU from an agenda of litigation to one that advances legislative and advocacy strategies.
- 1e. Evaluate need for increased professional staff both for litigation and advocacy efforts and hire based on such evaluation and fiscal constraints.

2. Expand current lobbying efforts

- 2a. Use staff and trained ACLU members to build trust and long-term relationships with members of the General Assembly, executive branch, and their staff.
- 2b. Assist ACLU members with training and other resources in order to lobby at the local level.
- 2c. Increase the use of technology to facilitate advocacy efforts.

Nancy G. Brown – Board Member
Jeff Miller - Staff

With assistance from:
Terri Enns – Board Member
Jason Jaffery – Staff

ACLU of Ohio
III. Leadership, Management, and Organization

Goal Statement: To identify, cultivate, recruit, and support leadership at all levels of the organization – board, staff, and at the grassroots level – that is visionary, provides direction and support for bold and innovative strategies, and anticipates statewide and national trends in non-profit management and social justice organizing.

1. Enhance Staff Leadership

- 1a. Continue emphasis on recruiting and retaining highly skilled and flexible staff who will work for ACLU long-term.
- 1b. Ensure continuity of staff leadership.
- 1c. Provide opportunities to progressively develop professional skills through new and challenging projects.

2. Strengthen Board Leadership

- 2a. Develop a comprehensive strategy for recruiting board members, with a particular emphasis on diversity.
- 2b. Strengthen the system of accountability for board members that includes expectations for the board position and measurements of engagement in the business of the organization.

3. Develop Leadership at the Local Level

- 3a. Identify additional local leaders and organizations with whom we can partner on civil liberties issues and initiatives.
- 3b. Utilize staff and volunteers to assist local grassroots constituency.
- 3c. Provide skill-building training and resources for membership across the state of Ohio, with particular attention to advocacy work.

Sue Carter – Board Member
Jeff Miller - Staff
With assistance from:
Steve Miller – Board Member
Shakya Diaz - Staff
Jason Jaffery – Staff

ACLU of Ohio
IV. Fiscal and Human Resources Management

Goal Statement: Fiscal and human resources refers specifically to a) the ongoing management of ACLU of Ohio financial and material resources, and b) compensated staff who operate the ACLU of Ohio. Goals are to achieve a fiscal resources management plan that balances ongoing stability with a nimbleness to respond to unexpected situations; and maintain the ACLU of Ohio's diverse, well trained, and forward-thinking staff.

1. Develop Long-Range Fiscal Plans

- 1a. Develop a long-term allocation use strategy that goes beyond annual budget cycles
- 1b. Identify a long-term facilities plan that encompasses both Northern Ohio and Central Ohio properties

2. Review and Refine Benefits

- 2a. Review and refine benefits plan to ensure equity and fairness for employees balanced with long-term financial viability for the ACLU.

Robyn Traywick – Board Member
Jason Jaffery – Staff

With assistance from:
Garry Jenkins –Board Member
Ann Rowlett – Staff

ACLU of Ohio
V. Development

Goal Statement: Ensure present and long-term vitality of philanthropic support for legal, education and advocacy programs, as well as general operating, through expanded and more sophisticated fundraising efforts.

1. Expand and enhance ACLU of Ohio fundraising efforts

- 1a. Increase staff dedicated to development efforts in order to continually strengthen the ACLU base of support and maximize annual, major and planned giving.
- 1b. Develop and implement methods for increased c4 funding—i.e., funding for legislative, lobbying and advocacy efforts—including strategic cultivation and solicitation of c4 major gifts and programs to increase ACLU of Ohio membership.
- 1c. Lay groundwork for special fund-raising campaigns to support expansion, endowment and planned giving.
- 1d. Refine and strategically target electronic communications to strengthen major donor relationships, and increase annual giving and membership.

Nancy Brown – Board Member
Jason Jaffery – Staff

With assistance from:
Terri Enns – Board Member
Jeff Miller – Staff

Conclusion

This strategic plan is intended to provide guidance to the entire organization of the ACLU of Ohio. It should be viewed as a broad guide to critical things the organization will do in pursuing its goals and objectives. It should also be viewed as a living document in the sense that it should be revised periodically as the organization adjusts to whatever emerges in its environment.

A critical factor for any strategic plan is its implementation. Many plans are well-written, but they must be used if they are to be successful. This means members of the organization must know what is in the plan, develop specific objectives and timelines for the items in the Planks, and review the plan periodically to assess how they are performing. In the heat of day-to-day work pressures, it is all too easy for people to become reactive to the immediate demands they face. The strategic plan can help them maintain a perspective on what is important and where they are trying to go. Formal mechanisms can be established which will help the Board and staff implement the strategy in their on-going activities.