

Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc.
Strategic Plan
January, 2011

Vision:

A legal system that provides
justice and fairness for women.

Tag Line:

Promoting justice and fairness for women.

Mission:

The mission of the Women's Law Center of Maryland is to serve as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women by advocating for the protection and expansion of women's legal rights through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change.

GOAL 1: PROVIDE DIRECT LEGAL SERVICES IN THE CORE WOMEN’S LAW CENTER AREAS OF FAMILY LAW, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAW, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IMMIGRATION LAW AND EMPLOYMENT LAW IN ORDER TO INCREASE JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS FOR WOMEN.

Objective 1.1: *Provide direct client representation to individuals in the core Women’s Law Center areas of family law, domestic violence law, domestic violence immigration law and employment law.*

Strategy 1.1.1: Provide representation in Protective Order proceedings.

Strategy 1.1.2: Provide representation in domestic violence immigration proceedings.

Strategy 1.1.3: Create, implement and evaluate a pilot project for providing limited scope representation in the core Women’s Law Center area of family law.

Strategy 1.1.4: Evaluate and assess the feasibility of expanding to provide direct representation in employment law cases.

Strategy 1.1.5: Evaluate and assess the feasibility of engaging in strategic litigation and/or appellate advocacy in the core Women’s Law Center areas of family law, domestic violence law, domestic violence immigration law and employment law.

Objective 1.2: *Provide brief educational and informational services through hotlines and publications in the core Women’s Law Center areas of family law, domestic violence law, domestic violence immigration law and employment law.*

Strategy 1.2.1: Provide brief services to assist individuals with family law issues through the Family Law Hotline and the Legal Forms Helpline.

Strategy 1.2.2: Provide brief services to assist individuals with employment law issues through the Employment Law Hotline.

Strategy 1.2.3: Disseminate educational publications.

Objective 1.3: *Administer programs that increase access to representation for women in the core Women’s Law Center areas of family law and employment law.*

Strategy 1.3.1: Implement and manage the Judicare project to provide access to legal representation to low income litigants in family law cases.

Strategy 1.3.2: Refer Employment Law Hotline callers to lawyer referral panel for representation.

Objective 1.4: *Periodically review provision of direct services and evaluate them for any unmet need.*

GOAL 2: LEAD POLICY REFORM AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE EFFORTS THAT RESULT IN THE PRESERVATION AND TANGIBLE IMPROVEMENT OF WOMEN'S LEGAL RIGHTS.

Objective 2.1: *Engage in legislative advocacy regarding issues that affect women's legal rights.*

Strategy 2.1.1: Identify, track and take positions on legislation that affects women's legal rights.

Strategy 2.1.2: Increase members' awareness of legislation that affects women's legal rights and facilitate members' participation in the legislative process.

Strategy 2.1.3: Lead and support coalitions advancing legislation that promotes women's legal rights.

Strategy 2.1.4: Serve as a leader in promoting one or more major legislative initiatives that affect women's legal rights.

Objective 2.2: *Identify issues and develop positions that facilitate policy reforms, especially in the core Women's Law Center areas of family law, domestic violence law, domestic violence immigration law and employment law.*

Strategy 2.2.1: Develop brief policy position papers on a broad range of issues that affect women's legal rights, especially in the core Women's Law Center areas of family law, domestic violence law, domestic violence immigration law and employment law.

Strategy 2.2.2: Lead and support policy reform to tangibly impact women's legal rights, especially in the core Women's Law Center areas of family law, domestic violence law, domestic violence immigration law and employment law.

Strategy 2.2.3: Ensure the Kaufman Alimony Guidelines are used by practitioners and decision makers and evaluate whether they positively impact women's lives.

Objective 2.3: *Advocate for a judiciary that is free of gender bias.*

Strategy 2.3.1: Screen judicial candidates and submit recommendations to the Judicial Nominating Commission and Governor.

Strategy 2.3.2: Monitor the judiciary and take appropriate action to address an individual judge's conduct or a judicial policy that negatively impacts women.

Objective 2.4: *Engage in and support activities and initiatives that promote access to justice for women.*

Strategy 2.4.1: Utilize Women's Law Center's innovative limited scope representation project to determine best practices, evaluate its efficacy and educate the legal community on its viability to increase access to representation.

Strategy 2.4.2: Serve on the Access to Justice Commission, participate in other coalitions and committees and seek out other opportunities to serve as a leading voice to promote access to justice for women.

Objective 2.5: *Engage in and support impact litigation that impacts women’s legal rights.*

Strategy 2.5.1: Support appellate litigation that impacts women’s legal rights.

Strategy 2.5.2 : File appellate litigation that impacts women’s legal rights in the core Women’s Law Center areas of family law, domestic violence law, domestic violence immigration law and employment law.

Strategy 2.5.3: Evaluate the feasibility of litigating strategic impact cases in the Women’s Law Center core areas of family law, domestic violence law, domestic violence immigration law and employment law.

Objective 2.6: *Analyze information and insights gathered from individual representation and educational initiatives to identify policy reforms and systemic change initiatives.*

Objective 2.7: *Educate and raise awareness about issues that impact women’s legal rights.*

Strategy 2.7.1: Educate and raise awareness regarding Women’s Law Center initiatives in the areas of policy reform, legislative advocacy, legal reform and access to justice.

Strategy 2.7.2: Identify, educate and raise awareness about a broad range of other critical policy issues that impact women’s legal rights.

Strategy 2.7.3: Utilize the Feminist Discussion series to identify, explore and increase awareness of policy issues that impact women’s legal rights.

GOAL 3: FOSTER A LEGAL COMMUNITY ADDRESSING FEMINIST ISSUES AND SERVE AS ITS LEADING VOICE.

Objective 3.1: *Identify and develop relationships that support a feminist legal community.*

Strategy 3.1.1: Foster a geographically and otherwise diverse feminist legal community throughout the state.

Strategy 3.1.2: Create and serve on coalitions and committees that work for Maryland women to effectuate the priorities of the Women's Law Center.

Strategy 3.1.3: Increase membership and volunteer base to increase Women's Law Center impact on priority issues.

Strategy 3.1.4: Serve on various committees relevant to Women's Law Center priorities.

Objective 3.2: *Raise awareness on feminist legal issues, focusing primarily in the core Women's Law Center areas of family law, domestic violence law, domestic violence immigration law and employment law.*

Strategy 3.2.1: Create opportunities for feminists to gather, network and discuss issues relevant to women's legal rights through feminist discussion series.

Strategy 3.2.2: Sponsor, support, and participate in symposia, conferences and other events affecting women's legal rights.

Strategy 3.2.3: Serve as the preeminent feminist legal resource on the core Women's Law Center issues of family law, domestic violence law, domestic violence immigration law and employment law.

Strategy 3.2.4: Evaluate ways to serve as a feminist legal resource on a broader range of critical issues impacting women in Maryland.

Strategy 3.2.5: Collaborate with and support efforts of the feminist legal movement.

Strategy 3.2.6: Increase and enhance communication efforts to support the feminist legal community's growth and Women's Law Center as a leading voice.

Objective 3.3: *Cultivate and support feminist leaders in the legal community.*

Strategy 3.3.1: Maintain affiliation with student groups supporting the Women's Law Center at the University of Baltimore (SSWLC) and the University of Maryland (WLSA).

Strategy 3.3.2: Maintain a viable and credible judicial selection committee to support feminist candidates and to increase sensitivity to feminist legal issues, including gender bias and women's issues.

Strategy 3.3.3: Encourage feminist legal and policy scholarship.

Strategy 3.3.4: Sponsor and support Women's Law Center internships and evaluate the creation of a Women's Law Center fellowship program.

Strategy 3.3.5: Provide opportunities for mentoring, networking, and community building among feminists within the legal community.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE AND FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO ACHIEVE THE WOMEN'S LAW CENTER'S MISSION.

Objective 4.1: *Develop and maintain a strong staff capable of accomplishing organizational objectives.*

Strategy 4.1.1: Recruit and retain skilled and committed staff.

Strategy 4.1.2: Increase staff salaries to compete with other legal services providers.

Strategy 4.1.3: Provide opportunities for staff professional development.

Objective 4.2: *Maintain effective institutional leadership and management.*

Strategy 4.2.1: Ensure an engaged and effective Board that fulfills its fiduciary and policy obligations.

Strategy 4.2.2: Ensure Board stability and long-term commitment.

Strategy 4.2.3: Ensure Board diversity.

Strategy 4.2.4: Develop and maintain effective senior staff to ensure stable leadership.

Objective 4.3: *Ensure that senior leadership has an engaged and respected presence in the community enhancing the Women's Law Center's profile as an effective advocacy organization.*

Strategy 4.3.1: Board and staff attend key events and meetings.

Objective 4.4: *Engage in effective fundraising activities and fiscal management practices.*

Strategy 4.4.1: Practice sound financial management to ensure financial stability.

Strategy 4.4.2: Implement a multi-faceted development plan to accomplish the Women's Law Center's mission.

Objective 4.5: *Develop and implement an effective public relations and communications strategy.*

Strategy 4.5.1: Re-evaluate and re-develop the Women's Law Center brand to identify, sharpen and effectively promote the organization's essence, core values, mission and message.

Strategy 4.5.2: Operationalize the Women's Law Center brand.

Strategy 4.5.3: Assess staffing necessary for an effective communications strategy and evaluate the feasibility of obtaining the necessary staff.

Strategy 4.5.4: Improve and enhance the effectiveness of the website.

Strategy 4.5.5: Expand and enhance usage of electronic and web-based communications and social media.