



Strategic Plan 2022-2025

Mission:

Indiana Legal Services uses the law to fight poverty and racism, empower clients, and improve access to justice.

Vision:

Dignity, fairness, and equality for all people under the law.

Values:

Our work will be guided and informed by our beliefs and commitments to:

- **Courage** in our legal work and advocacy positions
- **Compassion** for clients and colleagues
- **Dignity and respect** for our clients, colleagues, and all people we encounter
- **Inclusiveness and diversity** in all aspects of our organization and work
- **Collegiality** in working with one another
- **Partnerships** with the communities we serve
- **Adaptability** in responding to changes in the legal landscape
- **Strategy** in addressing problems facing our client community

Goal 1: Ensure all aspects of our work are grounded in racial equity.

Priority Strategies:

- 1.1 Continue to recruit attorneys, staff, volunteers, interns, and board members who reflect the diversity of the clients ILS serves.
- 1.2 Integrate racial equity into case acceptance by asking how oppression/discrimination affects the potential case.
- 1.3 Use a race equity lens to help guide our strategic advocacy.
- 1.4 Regularly offer staff and board training opportunities to better understand race and the systemic causes of poverty and to develop cultural competency.
- 1.5 Share power, resources, and leadership opportunities with staff of color.
- 1.6 Enhance marketing efforts to better inform communities of color about ILS's services.

- 1.7 Develop an internal culture that supports the achievement of racial equity metrics.
- 1.8 Ensure all ILS policies are inclusive.
- 1.9 Advertise opportunities internally to encourage BIPOC staff to join teams working on strategic advocacy, including federal and state appellate cases.

Measurable Outcomes:

- *By 2024,*
 - *At least 15% of the case handling staff will speak Spanish fluently,*
 - *At least 20% of staff attorneys will be people of color,*
 - *At least 20% of the executive team, managing attorneys, and project directors will be people of color, and*
 - *At least 33% of staff including all attorneys and non-attorneys will be people of color.*
- *20 interns in a new paid internship program geared toward increasing diversity in 2022.*
- *Each office and project reports annually on the number of outreaches and percent of outreaches in racially diverse communities.*
- *ILS participates in Shriver Racial Justice Institute, starting in 2022.*
- *Each office is able to determine whether a request for legal assistance meets ILS case priorities and allocate staffing resources, based on data generated through overall race equity principles, by 2023.*
- *Select at least one strategic advocacy goal annually using a race equity lens.*
- *At least two training opportunities offered annually to educate staff and board about race and poverty.*
- *All managers will participate in required annual training about race and poverty.*

Goal 2: Uniformly deliver excellent representation to our clients.

Priority Strategies:

- 2.1 Overhaul the website and upgrade social media to communicate our purpose, promote our services, and simplify client and applicant interaction.
- 2.2 Train staff to record client referrals to non-legal services, including social workers and partners that serve vulnerable populations (e.g. veterans, rural residents, bankruptcy, seniors, trafficked individuals, children transitioning from foster care, healthcare, etc.).
- 2.3 Partner with other organizations that serve people of color to listen to the needs of our BIPOC clients and shape our annual advocacy goals and case acceptance guidelines.
- 2.4 Partner with and train non-lawyer volunteers to expand the number of low-income and elderly clients served state-wide.
- 2.5 Upgrade the technology infrastructure and helpdesk services to support ILS's state-wide services.
- 2.6 Improve the intake system's accessibility and efficiency to provide a more user-friendly experience.

- 2.7 Analyze our advice practice to focus resources on cases where our advice is measurably useful and respond promptly to applicants in cases where advice is unlikely to be helpful and we lack resources to provide full representation.
- 2.8 Improve the infrastructure to share forms, templates, and research more effectively.
- 2.9 Consider centralizing some practices including expungements, driver's licenses, and bankruptcy in order to offer all practice areas in all offices.
- 2.10 Increase the focus on rural counties through various methods, including technology.
- 2.11 Survey extended service clients and a representative group of advice clients at the end of each representation to determine satisfaction.

Measurable Outcomes:

- *Website overhauled by 9/30/22 and updated monthly thereafter.*
- *Beginning 9/30/23, ILS annually will review and revise case acceptance guidelines, including recommendations from the BIPOC advisory group.*
- *Beginning in 2023, annual surveys indicate that our services improve clients' understanding, knowledge, or well-being in at least 75% of extended service cases and 55% of advice cases.*
- *By 4/1/22, interested managing attorney and project directors participate with communications staff in creating or updating ILS's social media plan.*
- *By 12/31/23, 65% of the reject referrals and advice only letters include a referral to other legal resources and/or community resources (ex., bar association, township trustee, rental assistance program).*
- *By 1/31/24, each regional office will have developed and sustained at least one new partnership or will have renewed at least one established, but inactive partnership with a community organization in their rural or mixed rural/urban counties.*
- *By 12/31/24, ILS will have obtained new funding for and developed three new partnerships with organizations that serve underserved communities.*
- *Beginning 6/30/22, ILS will convene a geographically diverse advisory group of organizations serving BIPOC communities to meet annually to inform ILS on the civil legal needs their clients are experiencing.*
- *Non-lawyer volunteers are engaged in assisting every office statewide.*
- *By 12/31/23, 90% of loss of service issues are resolved by IT within three business days and 60% of all tickets are resolved by IT within five business days.*
- *By 12/31/2023, the number of potential clients lost during the online intake process is reduced by half.*

Goal 3: Advocate for clients and client communities, especially marginalized populations, to ensure just outcomes.

Priority Strategies:

- 3.1 Create opportunities for listening to clients and client communities.

- 3.2 Integrate larger advocacy goals into our day-to-day legal work to ensure we balance serving client needs with taking on cases with the potential for systemic impact.
- 3.3 Use data and best practices research to shape ILS's strategic advocacy agenda, with special focus on populations isolated by age, language, disability, geography, social class, race, or similar factors.
- 3.4 Communicate the advocacy agenda more broadly to staff and board and externally.
- 3.5 Collaborate with the courts and other public and private partners to develop advocacy strategies to meet client needs.
- 3.6 Use pro bono lawyers in our strategic advocacy work.
- 3.7 Educate state and local legislators about ILS's work.
- 3.8 Develop appropriate responses to help mitigate the negative impacts of Covid and the post-Covid environment on the clients we serve.
- 3.9 Use the data we collect during intake and our representation of clients to inform our discussions with legislators, funders, and partner organizations.

Measurable Outcomes:

- *Take on four strategic, high-impact advocacy goals per year, based on client and staff input and new legal developments.*
- *Integrate strategic advocacy training and updates into two agency-wide trainings/conferences per year.*
- *Provide two additional strategic advocacy update/input opportunities per year to staff.*
- *Participate in two meetings with state or federal legislators and provide testimony on two pieces of pending legislation per year.*
- *Participate in one judicial task force and two judicial or agency rulemaking processes each year.*

Goal 4: Attract and retain superior talent throughout the organization.

Priority Strategies:

- 4.1 Continue to adjust compensation for all staff to allow employees to have long careers at ILS.
- 4.2 Innovate our marketing practices to continue recruiting a diverse workforce with respect to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, age, color, or genetic information.
- 4.3 As part of the recruitment process, use a racially diverse interview panel and scoring process for each candidate, based on uniform experience and skill level requirements.
- 4.4 Applicants for all positions will demonstrate commitment to ILS's goals of addressing racial equity.
- 4.5 Develop mentorship opportunities for new hires.
- 4.6 Provide continued work flexibility and wellness initiatives to ensure staff feel valued and supported in the work they do.

- 4.7 Offer employee leadership career paths, including supervision and management skills and opportunities to develop expertise in specialized areas of law.
- 4.8 Nurture relationships with law schools and universities inside and outside Indiana to develop meaningful connections with students, future lawyers, and potential clients.
- 4.9 Improve onboarding and training based on staff input.
- 4.10 Develop policies, practices, and systems to provide employees with safe work environments.
- 4.11 Ensure adequate staff support for ILS's legal work.
- 4.12 Encourage inclusion through committee work, co-counseling, and advocacy.
- 4.13 Maintain our reputation for strong advocacy and quality legal representation by setting clear performance expectations for all ILS employees.
- 4.14 Strengthen bonds between offices by creating joint projects and representation opportunities.
- 4.15 Ensure employee performance evaluation tools align with the outcomes sought through the strategic plan.
- 4.16 Encourage all staff to participate in training to increase their skills and/or provide better services to clients.

Measurable Outcomes:

- *Five employees with less than seven years of experience move into leadership and senior roles between 1/1/2022 and 12/31/2024.*
- *By 12/31/2023 strategic advocacy and co-counseling opportunities reflect staff diversity (e.g. if 50% of lawyers are women, 50% of co-counseling and strategic advocacy is done by women).*
- *Starting in 2022, annual staff satisfaction surveys report 85% or more of staff rate ILS as a good or excellent place to work.*
- *Office security policy promulgated by 7/1/2022.*
- *Three externship or internship partnerships created with Indiana law schools/student groups by 2023.*
- *Develop a framework for evaluating support staffing through employees and volunteers, including training, by 12/31/2022.*
- *60% of employees take advantage of the wellness opportunities and at least 50% use flexible work schedules.*
- *In the annual survey, 80% of new staff report mentorship, training, and onboarding are successful.*
- *By 12/31/2023 the overall makeup of ILS's regular standing committees reflects staff diversity.*
- *Every employee has specific performance expectations, on which merit wage decisions could be based, in their annual performance evaluations by Q1 2023.*
- *At least two training opportunities for non-lawyers are promoted annually by ILS.*
- *By 1/1/22, all new job announcements will require staff to demonstrate a commitment to racial equity; all job descriptions and performance evaluation criteria will be updated by 12/31/22.*