



2018 – 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Legal Aid of Nebraska (Legal Aid) is charged with providing free civil legal aid to low-income Nebraskans across the state, but the need for our services far outstrips the available resources to support and provide these services. This widening “justice gap” will likely only grow worse in the years ahead, with grave implications for society and our justice system.

Legal Aid’s efforts to “make equal justice happen” is framed by this reality. Therefore, Legal Aid must make a thoughtful and deliberate allocation of these limited resources to accomplish our mission and to ensure civil legal assistance is being directed to the highest priority legal needs to as many eligible clients as reasonably possible.

This “2018-20 Strategic Plan” expresses how Legal Aid will respond to this challenge, being mindful of resource limitations but at the same time recognizing the value in flexibility on strategies going forward, and the opportunities this plan presents for growth and development.

This plan focuses on five basic areas, each of which enable Legal Aid staff, Board, and volunteers to better deliver high quality civil legal services, broadly defined and creatively delivered, on identified legal need priorities.

The following are the “Guiding Principles” for this plan- the pledge for the organization to live up to, and the roadmap for Legal Aid into the next three years:

Access to Civil Legal Services: Efficient and effective access to quality legal assistance ensured across multiple access points throughout Nebraska.

High Quality Civil Legal Services: Qualified and effectively trained staff that possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to carry out quality civil legal services under identified legal priority areas.

Financial Stability and Diverse Funding Base: Diverse, broad, creative, and fully leveraged funding sources to ensure overall long-term financial stability and availability of legal assistance across the state.

Broad-Based Communication Strategies: High visibility across Nebraska to foster a greater understanding of Legal Aid services and priorities, to in turn build new and strengthen existing partnerships and collaborations, and nurture growth of the existing donor base.

Highly Trained and Skilled Staff: Comprehensive and continuous professional development to enhance the provision of legal services by improving the recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified staff across the firm.

Well-Governed and Managed Organization: A modern, efficient, and responsive administrative and operational infrastructure, with highly skilled and engaged Board members and senior managers, to ensure a strong and healthy organization built for the future.

For the next three years, Legal Aid will be guided by this Plan, which represents a strategic approach to fulfilling our mission within the limited resources available. The Plan represents hours of research, meetings, thinking, and decision-making about the future direction of Legal Aid. The Plan outlines the organization’s Guiding Principles, along with Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Responsible Parties to breathe life into these principles. The Plan also includes an “Implementation and Accountability Plan” to insure ongoing efforts to align Legal Aid’s priorities and resource allocations with our mission and goals.

INTRODUCTION

Who We Are

Legal Aid of Nebraska (Legal Aid) is the only statewide provider of free and direct civil legal services to Nebraska's poor. Legal Aid's objective is to address poverty through civil legal services, helping our low-income clients achieve positive outcomes that measurably improve the quality of their lives, help them get up and out of poverty, and increase family stability.

For over 50 years, Legal Aid has worked to provide low-income individuals with the same quality legal advice and representation that others with more resources take for granted. Legal Aid increases hope and opportunity for low-income Nebraskans by helping clients navigate their way through a complex and often intimidating legal system.

To accomplish this, Legal Aid provides a full range of civil legal services, from brief advice and counsel, to assistance with self-representation at Access to Justice Centers, to well-vetted referrals to pro bono programs and other legal service providers, and to direct representation in legal forums large and small (including at the administrative, local, state and federal levels). Legal Aid serves a central role in Nebraska's civil legal aid delivery system, helping low-income Nebraskans identify and address their legal needs, and obtain legal assistance from not only Legal Aid but also its many legal and community partners. Legal Aid also directly works with and is supported by the Nebraska judiciary, state and local Bar associations, tribes, and corporate and civic leaders across the state in this work.

As the only statewide provider of direct and free civil legal services to Nebraska's poor, Legal Aid in 2017 has approximately 80 staff members, including over 40 attorneys, located in 8 offices across the state. Legal Aid provides general civil legal services on its priority areas in every office, and through over 150 "Private Attorney Involvement" (PAI) attorneys in rural counties. Legal Aid complements and expands these basic services reaching many more clients through over a dozen statewide programs (efforts to target specific populations) and projects (efforts to address targeted legal issues). These include the Native American Program, Migrant and Ag Worker Program, the Health Education and Law Project (HELP), Tax Law Project, and Juvenile Justice Project. To qualify for Legal Aid, generally an individual or household must be at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (approximately 315,000 Nebraskans, about 17.5% of the state's entire population); there are some exceptions, such as for victims of domestic violence and for low-income farmers.

For these Legal Aid clients—low-income Nebraskans facing major life challenges each day—the most powerful and effective response often involves direct legal help. Legal representation with these challenges is often the only thing standing between a family's efforts to see better days, or suffer a fall into deep poverty and a loss of hope.

In the last year alone Legal Aid provided free civil legal services to over 23,000 low-income Nebraskans through over 10,000 cases. This is a huge amount of legal work, and it is particularly remarkable knowing it involves representing low-income clients with some of life's toughest legal challenges. Families fighting wrongful evictions, women trapped in abusive relationships, children needing a stable home, wage earners losing what little they have to abusive debt collectors, veterans denied rightfully earned benefits—all needing legal help to solve these life-changing problems.

A new national study released by the Legal Services Corporation in June 2017 reconfirmed what we see on a daily basis: "Low-income Americans receive inadequate or no professional legal help for 86% of the civil legal

problems they face in a given year.”¹ Clearly, there is much more to be done, many legal needs to be met, and more justice to be obtained for our eligible clients.

Challenges Ahead

Legal Aid’s provision of statewide and effective civil legal services faces several major challenges ahead.

Replacing Federal Funding: One major challenge is the future of federal funding of our services through the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). In 2017, Legal Aid received about one-third of our funding from federal sources. This mostly comes from the federal LSC, along with grants from federal agencies, including the U.S. Departments of Justice, Agriculture, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the IRS. The rest of our funding comes from the State of Nebraska, IOLTA, foundation grants, individual donors, United Ways, churches, and contracts for services. In the last two years, Legal Aid has led a successful effort to increase state funding, and has added other new public and private funding sources. This funding diversity is the envy of legal aid programs across the country.

But, as of the date of this Strategic Plan, Congress is considering a major cut in federal funding for the LSC for 2018. Any cut in funding would severely limit the range and scope of Legal Aid’s services. Federal funding has long been an institutional foundation for Legal Aid’s entire statewide efforts; losing it would severely cripple all we do, including for children, families, veterans, and the disabled living in every city and town in Nebraska. Offices would close, staff would leave, and low-income Nebraskans would go unrepresented. Finding a replacement funding source for this unreliable federal LSC source is a dominant funding challenge ahead.

Effective Statewide Presence: Nebraska is simply a large geographic space, with most of the population on the eastern side of the state. Making effective civil legal assistance available over all 93 counties is a daunting and expensive challenge. Nevertheless, Legal Aid has consistently and creatively responded to this challenge, through among other ways, the PAI program, new technology (TIG grants), the REACH initiative, and satellite offices. New opportunities, though, for providing civil legal services exist, including working more directly with community partners (community centers, libraries, community colleges), creating new “virtual” clinics and other rural “Access to Justice” assisted self-help service models, and building additional and convenient online resources. These new opportunities suggest a path forward to insure a consistent and meaningful response to addressing the challenge of being a statewide legal services provider.

Paying Competitive Salaries: Legal Aid is a desirable employer for many reasons, with well-supported and family-friendly workplaces. But its salary structure remains behind the non-profit community generally, and well below its real competitors for high quality attorneys, the public defenders and county and its full implementation, while only providing modest increases, is still a large and growing expense for the organization. Legal Aid knows, though, that while this is progress, without making a full commitment to raising salaries to a competitive level, Legal Aid will continue to miss the opportunity to hire and retain many otherwise passionate and high quality attorneys, with and without experience. This will continue to particularly impact hiring in Legal Aid’s rural Nebraska offices. Legal Aid must be offering competitive salaries within the next three to five years; the impact of these salary increases will be greatly increased personnel costs, the primary expense for the organization.

Known but Not Widely Understood: The remarkable services and outcomes produced by Legal Aid’s staff on a daily basis remains generally under the public’s “radar,” despite efforts to increase the public’s attention. Even

¹Legal Services Corporation. 2017. *The Justice Gap: Measuring the Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-income Americans*. Prepared by NORC at the University of Chicago for Legal Services Corporation. Washington, DC.

within the legal profession, Legal Aid's role and activities remain substantially underappreciated and poorly understood. This reality lowers the ability to raise funds and grow support, and hinders resource and partnership development. Legal Aid's vital importance to the civil justice system remains little known, despite our leadership and involvement. Raising our profile, and doing so in a way that ensures a better appreciation for the importance of our work, is critically important to a healthy organizational future.

In the face of these challenges and others (such as the continuing low rate of funding through IOLTA), Legal Aid can and will strategize to overcome them, including through this Strategic Plan.

2013-2016 Strategic Plan

In 2013, Legal Aid's Board of Directors approved a three-year Strategic Plan for 2013-16. This document guided the organization during this time through a focus on growing financial sustainability, enhancing services, ensuring professionalism and teamwork among staff, and improving the utilization of volunteers. This plan is attached.

During this time period, Legal Aid went through significant leadership transitions, but was still able to accomplish many if not most of the listed goals and objectives. Staff, management and Board members are justifiably proud of how the organization continued to provide excellent civil legal services, make great progress in each of these plan areas, and achieve a level of financial stability during challenging times.

"Fresh Look: Poverty and Legal Aid Priorities in Nebraska"

In anticipation of crafting a new three-year strategic plan, in June, 2016 Legal Aid launched a comprehensive, statewide, community-based research process to better determine the legal needs facing low-income Nebraskans. The goal of the "Fresh Look: Poverty and Legal Aid Priorities in Nebraska" needs assessment project during 2016-17 was to identify the most pressing legal problems facing Legal Aid's low-income clients. In turn, this would allow Legal Aid to most effectively organize our limited resources around these needs through a new three-year strategic plan.

This effort asked hundreds of civic, community, and Bar leaders, and thousands of clients about the major issues and challenges facing poor Nebraskans. The project researched poverty data and demographics across the entire state, interviewed the institutions our clients deal with daily, and detailed the Nebraska justice system's responses to these challenges. Legal Aid staff met with dozens of organizations also engaged with seeking better lives for our shared low-income clients through stakeholder meetings in each of the communities where we have local offices, analyzed trends in caseloads, and conducted internal interviews with staff.

The results of the "Fresh Look" project found many high priority legal needs, including lack of affordable housing, high utility costs, limited jobs and income, poor health care access, lack of family stability, and high debt. "Fresh Look's" detailed community engagement efforts also confirmed there is a strong need for new partnerships to ensure legal assistance can be delivered in a more timely and effective manner.

A full report on "Fresh Look," including data sources, tables, and summaries, was submitted to the Board of Directors in August, 2017. This report is attached.

One Year 2017 Organizational Work Plan

As “Fresh Look” proceeded, in January 2017 the Board adopted a “One-Year and Three-Year Work Plan, to Create a New Strategic Plan and Set Advocacy Priorities.” This one-year work plan created an administrative planning bridge for Legal Aid to the creation of a three-year 2018-20 Strategic Plan.

This work plan required Board and staff to actively address administrative and management challenges and “goals” in the following areas: Management; Communications; Funders/Development; Professional Development; Access to Services; Litigation; Priorities; and Outcomes. Planning and reporting deadlines were created to address this wide range of internal administrative matters, including making further recommendations, with the goal of accomplishing identified issues prior to a July or August special meeting of the Board. Staff thereafter convened internal work groups and other strategies to address these goals, and regular progress reports were provided to the Board’s Planning and Priorities Committee.

Progress by staff on the 2017 one-year administrative work plan goals came through a variety of means. For example, to better inform future decisions on “Access to Services,” Legal Aid engaged in a detailed evaluation of our entire intake and access system through the UNO College of Public Affairs and Community Services. This evaluation on intake and access systems resulted in detailed recommendations on improved and more efficient access to services, as well as a buildout of our online services.

Also, the one-year work plan required staff to address the over 40 “priority” (e.g. expected implementation for funding reapplication) recommendations for management, intake, finance, fundraising, and other administrative improvements for Legal Aid arising out of the September, 2016 “Program Quality Visit” by the LSC’s Office of Program Performance (OPP). This internal audit—the first ever experienced by Legal Aid- was designed to evaluate the extent to which LSC grantees “are providing the highest quality legal services to eligible clients,” based upon the “LSC Performance Criteria.” This onsite evaluation focused on needs assessment and priority setting; access to services and engagement with the low-income community; legal work management and the legal work produced; and program management including board governance, leadership, resource development, and coordination within the delivery system.

The subsequent LSC report, issued in December, 2016, was a positive endorsement of Legal Aid’s operations and compliance with LSC Performance Criteria. At the same time, its detailed and lengthy recommendations for improvements also became a vehicle for action. This follow-up required a significant allocation of management and staff time, to accompany the time already committed to other one-year work requirements, but did foster a strong administrative base for a new three-year plan. Progress in each of these areas was certified as part of our LSC refunding application for 2018, filed in late May, 2017. A report on the status of the OPP audit follow-up is attached.

The one-year work plan also detailed the nature of the three-year strategic plan. The plan was to include but not limited to, guiding principles/goals related to Access to Services (intake, technology, community partners), Litigation (legal program), Communication (internal and external), Development/Fundraising, and Professional Development (fully trained staff, development to create and facilitate leaders, and organizing and facilitating a satisfactory workplace/environment).

2018-2020 LEGAL PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The “Fresh Look” needs assessment project and its identification of the most critical legal needs also enabled staff to make specific recommendations about new legal program priorities for the organization. Four of Legal Aid’s staff based advocacy task forces (Consumer, Family Law, Housing, and Public Benefits) met in the spring and summer, 2017, to discuss the findings from “Fresh Look.” These meetings were focused on identifying “what we are seeking to do” (priority areas, goals and objectives), along with the “How”: the “legal services provided to address the goals and objectives, including but not limited to.”

Subsequently, the staff recommendations on a set of “2018-20 Legal Program Priorities” were submitted to the Board prior to its August, 2017 special meeting for review and adoption. These legal program priorities were intended to inform the manner in which Legal Aid can most efficiently and cost-effectively deliver its civil legal services (from intake and advice to extended representation) in the next three years. Using these legal program priorities, Board, management, and staff can continue to refine and restructure its limited time and resources to best address the 2018-20 Legal Program Priorities.

On August 17, 2017, as part of its regular quarterly meeting, the Board thus adopted:

- The Legal Program Priorities Recommendations, found in “Fresh Look: Poverty and Legal Aid Priorities in Nebraska, Legal Needs Assessment Project, Final Report, 2017,” as the 2018-20 Legal Program Priorities, in the following priority areas with each of their respective goals and objectives:
 - Income and Benefits
 - Consumer Debt
 - Family
 - Housing
- A resolution that the 2018-20 Legal Program Priorities meets the requirements of 45 CFR Part 1620, to guide the types of cases and matters, including emergencies, to which the Legal Aid’s staff will limit its commitment of time and resources, and to determine the cases and matters which may be undertaken by Legal Aid.

The goals and objectives of each of these priority areas are attached, within the “Fresh Look” report.

2018-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

On August 17, 2017, the Legal Aid Board of Directors met in a special all-day “retreat” at Camp Carol Joy Hollings, Ashland, Nebraska. The purpose of this facilitated retreat was to discuss the elements of the 2018-20 Strategic Plan, and to make recommendations for inclusion in the plan. Staff were also invited to attend the retreat and provide their own insights as to the elements of the plan.

The Board discussion began with the creation of a broad “Vision” going forward for the next three years, one that fosters the work of most effectively—and efficiently—meeting the 2018-20 Legal Program Priorities. This “Vision” was to envision the big picture of how we assure long-term organizational health and vitality. The Board discussed many ideas and components as a group, and agreed upon a “Vision.”

Next, the Board discussed basic “Guiding Principles/Goals” for the next three years that broadly define our organizational focus, built on this vision. These “Guiding Principles/Goals” were in each of the areas identified by the one-year work plan. Board and staff met in small groups around each area, and created draft “Guiding Principles.”

In addition, each small group detailed “Strategies” underlying each of these “Guiding Principles,” identifying more specifically the means of achieving these principles and “goals/objectives.” This was also to include, if possible, quantifiable and “Measurable Outcomes” to ensure forward movement and accountability for each area. Each small group reported to the full group.

After this full day, based upon these small group recommendations and full Board discussions, the Board appointed a staff writing committee to complete the draft of the 2018-20 Strategic Plan by September 30, 2017, to be reviewed and amended by the Planning and Priorities Committee prior to submission to the Board by its October, 2017 annual and quarterly meeting. Detailed notes of this strategic planning retreat are attached.

“Fresh Look,” the setting of legal program priorities, and a new strategic plan are certainly not the end of the road. Rather, this road map is opening up tremendous possibilities and opportunities ahead for an even stronger and more vital Legal Aid of Nebraska, one able to withstand any challenges thrown its way (such as reductions in federal funding) and even more effectively over the next three years “make equal justice happen” for low-income Nebraska children, families, seniors, veterans, and every other client eligible for our high-quality civil legal assistance.

The following, then, is the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan for Legal Aid of Nebraska.

MISSION, VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Mission

To promote justice, dignity, hope and self-sufficiency through quality civil legal aid for those who have nowhere else to turn.

Vision

Legal Aid of Nebraska is financially able to provide consistent and equal access to civil legal services statewide to all qualified individuals.

Guiding Principles

Access to Civil Legal Services: Efficient and effective access to quality legal assistance ensured across multiple access points throughout Nebraska.

High Quality Civil Legal Services: Qualified and effectively trained staff that possess the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to carry out quality civil legal services under identified legal priority areas.

Financial Stability and Diverse Funding Base: Diverse, broad, creative, and fully leveraged funding sources to ensure overall long-term financial stability and availability of legal assistance across the state.

Broad-Based Communication Strategies: High visibility across Nebraska to foster a greater understanding of Legal Aid services and priorities, to in turn build new and strengthen existing partnerships and collaborations, and nurture growth of the existing donor base.

Highly Trained and Skilled Staff: Comprehensive and continuous professional development to enhance- the provision of legal services by improving the recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified staff across the firm.

Well-Governed and Managed Organization: A modern, efficient, and responsive administrative and operational infrastructure, with highly skilled and engaged Board members and senior managers, to ensure a strong and healthy organization built for the future.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

The Strategic Plan (Plan) was approved by the Legal Aid of Nebraska Board of Directors on October 11, 2017. This Plan outlines the overall goals for the next three years, as well as general strategies for reaching these goals.

The Plan will be implemented by developing annual work plans by administration and management that prioritize the most important goals and objectives and include specific measurable outcomes, action items with individual assignments, and timelines. These annual plans include but are not limited to work plans in each area of administration and management. All annual plans will be integrated into a yearly business plan. The Plan also relies on the use of data to measure the impact of given strategies and changes.

Plan implementation will be overseen by the Legal Aid Management Team, which includes the Executive Director, Deputy Director, Director of Legal Program, Director of Client and Community Engagement Services, Director of Development, Director of Finance, Director of Human Resources, IT Manager, as well as the Manager of Research and Evaluation. Staff, Legal Aid Board members, community partners and others will be involved as appropriate.

The success of the Plan and its various goals will be very much dependent on a wide range of staff, Board members and community partners providing leadership, contributing their time and taking ownership of the goals, strategies and action steps. Overall monitoring of the implementation will be the responsibility of Legal Aid of Nebraska's Executive Director, with periodic reports to the board of directors.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 1. Increase access to civil legal services and the civil justice system.

Objective 1.1 Strengthen organization-wide approaches to managing, evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of access to services statewide.

Strategy 1.1.1 Develop a framework to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of access to services.

Strategy 1.1.2 Develop LawHelp NE system to increase efficiency and effectiveness of access to services.

Strategy 1.1.3 Further refine the telephone intake system to imitate the triage function of the LawHelp NE system.

Strategy 1.1.4 Evaluate and modify intake models to ensure timely access to services are available statewide to qualified individuals.

Strategy 1.1.5 Evaluate and modify the Legal Aid of Nebraska website to make it more client focused, including providing a simplified and streamlined path to services and resources that meets all LSC requirements.

Strategy 1.1.6 Ensure policies and protocols regarding access and intake are followed, and review and update if necessary.

Strategy 1.1.7 Continue to measure client satisfaction and provide information to staff and management.

Strategy 1.1.8 Prospective clients who are from other cultures and/or LEP; or persons with cognitive, mental health, or other disabilities will be able to access services.

Staff Responsible: Director of Client and Community Engagement Services, Manager of Research and Evaluation, Intake Supervising Attorney, Information and Technology Manager, Executive Director

Objective 1.2 Increase and strengthen engagement and collaboration with community stakeholders, partners and client communities.

Strategy 1.2.1 Develop an annual communications plan that will increase community awareness and support for Legal Aid's mission and services.

Strategy 1.2.2 Work with all staff to implement a consistent, coordinated and effective approach to all community engagement activities.

Strategy 1.2.3 Coordinate with statewide partners to develop a uniform screening tool for staff to identify legal issues that can be addressed by Legal Aid, highlight access to civil legal services in partner communications and ensure consistent branding of Legal Aid of Nebraska.

Strategy 1.2.4 Develop targeted plan to engage and collaborate with partners and client communities.

Strategy 1.2.5 Create policies and procedures for all Legal Aid of Nebraska community engagement and education activities.

Strategy 1.2.6 Pursue community partnerships that lead to further resource development and fundraising opportunities through new community-based access portals and access points.

Staff Responsible: Director of Client and Community Engagement Services, Director of Donor Relations, Manager of Community Engagement and Partnerships

Objective 1.3 Increase the number of ways low-income Nebraskans can access legal services and the justice system.

Strategy 1.3.1 Expand LawHelp NE to become the entry portal to Legal Aid of Nebraska for online assistance.

Strategy 1.3.2 Expand number of substantive areas the user can explore in LawHelp NE before applying for services.

Strategy 1.3.3 Expand Access to Justice service delivery model by increasing the number of people served in the physical A2J centers, and exploring the option of creating a virtual A2J center in at least one existing rural office.

Strategy 1.3.4 Add to existing “remote” clinics in rural areas via an electronic medium.

Strategy 1.3.5 Regularly assess client outcomes of services provided through the A2J Centers.

Staff Responsible: Access to Justice Coordinator, Director of Legal Program, Director of Client and Community Engagement Services, Manager of Research and Evaluation, Information and Technology Manager, and A2J Taskforce

Goal 2. Provide high quality civil legal services that achieve meaningful results.

Objective 2.1 Provide high quality legal work.

Strategy 2.1.1 Develop and implement a process for adding to and updating a standard pleadings and brief bank.

Strategy 2.1.2 Develop and maintain a centralized location for internal and external learning/educational resources for staff and volunteers.

Strategy 2.1.3 Develop a uniform screening tool for staff to use to identify legal issues that can be addressed through the provision of holistic legal services (refer to Objective 1.2, Strategy 1.2.3).

Strategy 2.1.4 Provide substantive law and skills training opportunities, including basic training, to all staff in priority poverty law areas.

Strategy 2.1.5 Ensure policies and protocols regarding legal work (e.g. new attorney training protocol, case review policy, workload guidelines) are followed, and review and update if necessary.

Staff Responsible: Director of Legal Program, Managing Attorneys, Supervising Attorneys, Task Forces, Management Team

Objective 2.2 Regularly assess the legal needs of the client eligible population.

Strategy 2.2.1 Develop and implement an infrastructure to periodically review available data for changes in client legal needs and convey the results to management and staff.

Staff Responsible: Manager of Research and Evaluation, Management Team, Administration

Objective 2.3 Legal program work will address legal program priorities and will effectively allocate resources to address client legal needs.

Strategy 2.3.1 Litigation and advocacy plans developed by substantive task forces will be implemented to address legal program priorities, including developing legal information, tools for self-representation, advice, brief services, clinics, limited scope representation, litigation, community education and administrative advocacy. The plans will be reviewed, revised and updated by task forces on a quarterly basis. All staff and management will be provided the litigation and advocacy plans.

Strategy 2.3.2 Project and program legal work plans with goals and strategies will be developed and implemented, and updated on a quarterly basis. All staff and management will be provided the project and program work plans.

Strategy 2.3.3 Case acceptance priorities will be based upon the litigation and advocacy plans and project and program work plans, and will be developed annually. Managing attorneys will retain discretion on case acceptance based upon capacity of office and program staff. All staff and management will be trained on case acceptance priorities and factors for case acceptance.

Strategy 2.3.4 Options for service delivery, including creating units (e.g. housing unit), will be explored.

Strategy 2.3.5 Develop and implement a plan to increase the number of volunteer attorneys and professionals to increase legal program capacity statewide.

Staff Responsible: DOLP, Managing Attorneys, Supervising Attorneys, Task Forces, Management Team

Objective 2.4 Legal work results in measurable positive outcomes for individuals and communities.

Strategy 2.4.1 Develop and maintain the necessary infrastructure to understand the impact of Legal Aid's work on client communities and provide training and information to staff and management.

Strategy 2.4.2 Continue to measure client satisfaction and provide information to staff and management.

Strategy 2.4.3 Regularly assess client outcomes of services provided.

Staff Responsible: Manager of Research and Evaluation, Management Team, Administration

Goal 3. Provide for the long-term financial stability across all operations.

Objective 3.1 Continue to grow the diversity and targeting of Legal Aid's funding sources.

Strategy 3.1.1 Annually assess funding sources to ensure that they are consistent with program priorities and achieving strategic plan goals.

Strategy 3.1.2 Promote Legal Aid's activities in the communities served across Nebraska to inspire and ensure their support.

Strategy 3.1.3 Continually seek to identify new local, regional and national funders with goals and vision congruent with those of Legal Aid, specifically those who wish address the underlying causes of poverty.

Strategy 3.1.4 Create a resource development plan that is reviewed annually to obtain the necessary funding that will ensure that all programs and offices are at base capacity levels.

Staff Responsible: Director of Donor Relations, Executive Director

Objective 3.2 Expand and deepen external communications and public relations.

Strategy 3.2.1 Create an external communications plan.

Strategy 3.2.2 Ensure that the work of Legal Aid is broadly communicated and understood by stakeholders.

Staff Responsible: Director of Donor Relations, Executive Director

Goal 4. Continually strengthen the recruitment, retention, and professional development of all staff.

Objective 4.1 Ensure that all staff have professional development opportunities and training relevant to their role with Legal Aid and individual career goals.

Strategy 4.1.1 Annually review and update job descriptions as necessary to accurately reflect staff roles and responsibilities. Incorporate work plans into performance reviews where necessary.

Strategy 4.1.2 Encourage staff interested in assuming leadership roles to incorporate appropriate activities in their professional development goals to support these aspirations.

Strategy 4.1.3 Train all staff regularly on organizational policies and procedures.

Strategy 4.1.4 Annually review guidelines for legal caseload volume with expectations for case mix and productivity based on best practices.

Staff Responsible: Director of Human Resources and staff with management responsibilities

Objective 4.2 Increase the retention of high quality staff across the firm.

Strategy 4.2.1 Identify recurrent reasons that cause staff to leave, and to the extent possible, develop targeted strategies to address any such issues to promote employee retention.

Strategy 4.2.2 Conduct annual workplace satisfaction surveys to understand what staff think is working well and what could be done to improve the workplace environment.

Strategy 4.2.3 Develop competitive and sustainable compensation and benefits programs.

Strategy 4.2.4 Ensure that staff with management responsibilities have access to the necessary tools and training to ensure successful management of Legal Aid staff across the state.

Staff Responsible: Director of Human Resources and staff with management responsibilities

Objective 4.3 Ensure that all staff are trained to meet new staff protocols.

Strategy 4.3.1 Continue to use a New Attorney Training Protocol to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Strategy 4.3.2 Develop and implement a New Non-Attorney Staff Training Protocol that reflects specific job duties that will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Strategy 4.3.3 Develop a mentoring program. Assign a mentor to all new attorneys; form a young attorney's focus group, which will meet quarterly to share ideas and knowledge and make suggestions and recommendations to the Management Team.

Strategy 4.3.4 Maintain standardized training materials on organizational policies and procedures.

Staff Responsible: Management Team

Objective 4.4 Ensure that the performance review process encompasses relevant competencies.

Strategy 4.4.1 Develop competencies related to each role at Legal Aid of Nebraska.

Strategy 4.4.2 Evaluate the current performance review process, and if necessary, develop a new process that includes clearly defined competencies for each role at Legal Aid of Nebraska.

Strategy 4.4.3 Continue conducting performance reviews annually, including professional development goals as part of the review process.

Staff Responsible: Director of Human Resources and staff with management responsibilities

Goal 5. Maintain a well-governed and well-administered organization.

Objective 5.1 Ensure appropriate level of organizational infrastructure to cost-effectively address human resources, administration, and operational considerations.

Strategy 5.1.1 Review the space within individual office locations on an annual basis to determine if the current locations promote or impede efficient and effective delivery and access to services.

Strategy 5.1.2 Research effective staffing structures and documented best practices to include clearly defined base capacity levels across the organization.

Strategy 5.1.3 Develop and implement succession plans for key organizational positions which will identify specific steps that can be undertaken to address the planned and unplanned vacancies of key positions within the organization.

Strategy 5.1.4 Ensure a minimum reserve ratio of 3.0 months.

Staff Responsible: Management Team

Objective 5.2 The Board of Directors' governing capacity will continue to be improved through education and orientation.

Strategy 5.2.1 Provide orientation and board development for all board members, which would include, but not be limited to, financial literacy; LSC regulations; Legal Aid's strategic plan, priorities, and processes; community engagement; and resource development.

Strategy 5.2.2 Actively engage each Board member in the work of at least one Legal Aid committee or project throughout the year.

Strategy 5.2.3 Work with statewide partners to develop regular board training opportunities. Explore sending a board member to a national training opportunity annually, such as the Equal Justice Conference and NLADA annual meeting.

Strategy 5.2.4 100% of board member's will give to Legal Aid of Nebraska.

Staff Responsible: Board members, Management Team

Objective 5.3 Promote a culture of effective communication and transparency across the firm.

Strategy 5.3.1 Create an Internal Communications Committee comprised of staff from across the firm.

Strategy 5.3.2 The Communications committee will develop and implement an internal communications plan that will promote two-way and multi-channel, passive and interactive, feedback loops with employees which will be assessed on an annual basis. The plan will facilitate opportunities for staff to raise questions, comments and concerns with the Management Team, and to share ideas and collaborate with one another. The plan will also target internal strategies to better communicate organizational updates to the budget and development, operations, human resources, and new or updates to policies, procedures and compliance.

Strategy 5.3.3 Communication will be encouraged and solicited by and between staff, management and the Board through consistent use of Legal Aid's open door policy.

Strategy 5.3.4 Conduct an annual survey to measure internal communication effectiveness over time.

Staff Responsible: Management Team, Staff, Board

Objective 5.4 Ensure that the appropriate technology is in place to support the range and scope of legal services across the firm.

Strategy 5.4.1 Create and implement a formal technology plan to rotate technology hardware on a regular basis.

Strategy 5.4.2 Incorporate technology planning and budgeting with technology staff into the application, budgeting, and planning phases for how to spend all targeted and non-targeted funding sources.

Staff Responsible: Management Team, IT Manager

Objective 5.5 All staff will be able to communicate effectively with non-English speakers; persons with cognitive, mental health, or other disabilities; and individuals from other cultures.

Strategy 5.5.1 Review and revise Legal Aid of Nebraska's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan, as needed.

Strategy 5.5.2 Train all new employees on LEP and nondiscrimination policies.

Strategy 5.5.3 Train all staff periodically on working with interpreters, including over-the-phone and in-person, culturally competent client representation, working with individuals with disabilities, and working with people in crisis.

Strategy 5.5.4 Develop and implement a system for determining which materials are most important to LEP communities and ensuring they are translated and updated.

Staff Responsible: Deputy Director, Director of Human Resources and LEP Coordinator