



**LSC** | America's Partner  
for Equal Justice  
LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

STRATEGIC PLAN  
2026-2030



# Table of Contents



**02** Why CLS Is Here

**04** Mission, Vision & Values

**05** Plan Development

**09** Strategic Priorities

**15** Accountability

**16** Conclusion & Acknowledgements

# Why CLS Is Here...

Community Legal Services is a full service civil legal aid law firm that promotes equal access to justice, which is a core American value.

According to the 2022 LSC Justice Gap Report, 92% of low income people do not get any or enough legal helpful for their civil legal issue.

Nearly one million people in Central Florida qualify for our services. Our attorneys and advocates provide legal assistance, helping nearly 10,000 people in Central Florida each year.

Our legal aid organization provides professional legal services to help vulnerable populations protect their livelihoods, their health, and their families. We make it easier for the most vulnerable and disenfranchised Central Floridians to access legal information, gain legal assistance and representation, and to understand their rights.





# Mission & Vision

Legal Access for All

---

## MISSION

---

Enhancing the lives of those we serve through legal support, assistance, and education.

---

## VISION

---

A society where everyone is equipped to recognize when they have a legal issue and can navigate the systems needed to help resolve it.



# Our Values



## CORE VALUES



### PASSIONATE

Our core values drive the decisions we make, how we work, and exemplify our staff, volunteers and partnerships. Our mission requires us to be a **PILLAR** in the communities we serve.

We eagerly fight for meaningful causes, no matter how challenging. Our enthusiasm for justice influences others to join in making change in our community through their service, practice, and charity.



### INTEGRITY

We are committed to honesty and professionalism in all our interactions. Trust is the foundation for the integral role we fill in our community's system of justice.



### LEVERAGE

As a team, we make a difference in people's lives. We bring all our resources to the table to ensure that the clients feel supported, empowered, and heard.



### LEADERSHIP

We are leaders working to find ways to make our communities a better place to live. High standards are in our blood, and we pursue excellence in our practice and partnerships.



### ADAPTABILITY

We see opportunities to increase our impact. We listen to all ideas, embrace change, and see continuous improvement in order to achieve better outcomes for our clients, organizations, and our community.



### RESPECT

We treat everyone with professionalism, dignity, and respect. We keep our promises and embrace diversity, communicate with empathy, and foster positivity in all we do.



# Plan Development

01



Discovery &  
Planning

Research,  
Information  
Gathering &  
Analysis

03



Impact  
Measures &  
KPIs

Strategic Plan  
Documentation

04



Community Legal Services (CLS) partnered with thredpartners to develop their 2026 - 2030 Strategic Plan. thredpartners worked with the Strategic Planning Committee over the course of six-months to complete a four-phase strategic planning process that included Discovery and Planning, Research, Information Gathering and Analysis, Impact Measures and KPIs and Documentation and Presentation.

“ Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things. The task of management is to ensure that the right things are done in the right way, and this includes involving the right stakeholders. ”

*Peter Drucker*



# Needs Assessment

## Key Findings

**CLS completed a  
Regional Community  
Needs Assessment in  
December 2023. The  
Needs Assessment  
Report resulted in  
five key takeaways:**

“ Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. ”

*Nelson Mandela*

- Extending CLS' reach into the underserved communities will require consistency, commitment, and collaboration with local non-legal service providers.
- The legal system was not designed for people without legal education. Providing a basic understanding of the law to both community members and partners will help them better identify legal issues and if necessary empower them to act on their own.
- There is a growing gap between the Federal Poverty Line and the ALICE population (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) due to inflation and cost of living. More people need CLS' services who are not financially eligible but still cannot afford an attorney on their own.
- There is more to the housing issue than the cost of rent and houses. Rental demand and rising costs of homeowners insurance are increasing housing costs. Non-traditional housing, including shelters, nursing homes, and transitional options are becoming less available.
- CLS provides legal services within areas of need but is limited in scope by project restrictions and funding.

# SWOT Analysis



By identifying CLS' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats the Strategic Planning Committee realized several key benefits:

**Comprehensive View:** Provides a clear overview of internal strengths and weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats.

**Informed Decisions:** Supports more informed and strategic decision-making.

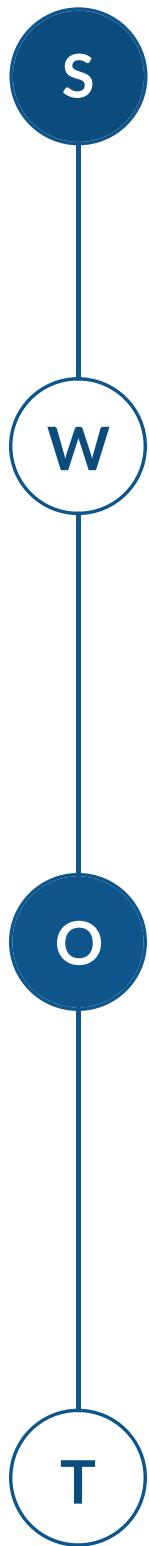
**Alignment:** Aligns resources with opportunities and threats.

**Prioritization:** Helps prioritize key initiatives and focus efforts.

**Risk Management:** Identifies and mitigates potential risks.

**Opportunity Recognition:** Highlights areas for growth and innovation.

**Team Collaboration:** Encourages input and collaboration from stakeholders.



**Strengths** - passionate, knowledgeable and committed  
**Leadership** - effective, supportive and acts with integrity  
**Innovative** - adaptable, data driven and prepared  
**Partnerships** - collaborative, inclusive and valued

**Capacity** - limited number of staff and time required to fill open positions  
**Awareness** - large geographic area makes it difficult to do outreach consistently  
**Restrictive funding** - limits clients who can be seen and what they can be seen for  
**Showing Impact** - limited outcomes to show non-grantmaking stakeholders the impact of the work

**Funding** - identifying new funding opportunities and increasing pro bono involvement  
**Partnerships** - opening a two-way street with partners to improve holistic services  
**Preparedness** - reaching clients earlier to help equip them to navigate their legal needs  
**Staff & Board** - improving the image of legal aid, what it means to be part of their work, to attract talented staff, and diversify the Board

**Funding** - lack of diverse fund opportunities and potential economic downturn  
**Public Sentiment** - historical criticism for services being provided by legal aid to the vulnerable people of central Florida  
**Staff** - limited resources to sustain and grow compensation to retain and attract talent  
**Need** - lack of resources to reach into rural communities and serve the growing ALICE population



# Strategic Planning Retreat

The results of the SWOT Analysis along with the Key Takeaways from the Needs Assessment were used in the strategic planning process at a one and a half day strategic planning retreat held on June 10th and 11th, 2024. Retreat participants included members of the Strategic Planning Committee which was comprised of key CLS Leadership, Staff and Board members.



A special thanks to **GrayRobinson**, in Orlando, FL. for hosting the CLS Strategic Planning Committee Retreat!



By conducting a thorough SWOT analysis, CLS identified their internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats. This information allows CLS to prioritize their strategic initiatives in a way that maximizes their strengths, minimizes their weaknesses, seizes opportunities, and mitigates threats. By aligning their priorities with their overall goals, CLS can ensure that their efforts are focused and effective. This systematic approach will help them achieve their objectives in a realistic and sustainable manner.



# Strategic Priorities

## 01 Client Services & Programs

Strengthen advocacy strategies and improve the efficiency and accessibility of our services

## 02 Community Partnerships

Cultivate strong relationships that leverage resources and expertise

## 03 Resource Development

Diversification of funding sources and promoting culture of volunteerism

## 04 Branding

Enhance CLS' communication efforts and build stronger, more trusting relationships with stakeholders

## 05 Organizational Infrastructure

Attract skilled staff and continue to foster an engaged and effective board





CLS will strengthen their advocacy strategies and improve the efficiency and accessibility of their services.

#### **Goal #1:**

Leverage strategic advocacy and litigation to extend their reach and impact beyond direct service provision, to being part of systemic change.

- Objective #1: Draft and effectuate Strategic Advocacy Plan
- Objective #2: Align advocacy and Case Priorities with community needs

#### **Goal#2:**

Innovate service delivery models to increase effectiveness and improve accessibility.

- Objective #1: Identify community legal partnerships
- Objective #2: Ensure accessibility of services
- Objective #3: Provide a simplified intake process
- Objective #4: Assess current models and leverage technology where appropriate (AI)

# **Strategic Priority #1:**

## **Client Services & Programs**





CLS will cultivate strong relationships throughout the community that leverage shared resources and expertise.

#### Goal#1:

Create partnerships that focus on mutual benefits, shared values and long-term engagement.

- Objective #1: Refine and improve organizational capacity for partnerships
- Objective #2: Identify and invest in relationships that can grow into high impact/profitability partnerships

#### Goal#2:

Enhance community legal partnerships to create robust support networks for our clients.

- Objective #1: Identify organizations that serve the non-legal needs of our community
- Objective #2: Explore potential funding sources to support community legal partnerships
- Objective #3: Invest in staff partnership training

# Strategic Priority #2:

## Community Partnerships





CLS will increase their capacity to serve the community through diversification of funding sources and promoting a culture of volunteerism.

#### **Goal #1:**

Maintain and expand funding sources to have a more balanced funding pool

- Objective #1: Expand funding partnerships in the community
- Objective #2: Develop a culture of philanthropy among CLS staff and Board

#### **Goal #2:**

Increase volunteer and pro bono engagement to expand CLS' capacity

- Objective #1: Increase awareness of CLS' pro bono program and attorney supports
- Objective #2: Invest in Law Students to cultivate long-term commitment to pro bono
- Objective #3: Foster a mindset of responsibility to the community across the legal profession

# **Strategic Priority #3:**

## **Resource Development**





CLS will enhance their communication efforts and build stronger, more trusting relationships with stakeholders.

#### Goal #1:

Reach more of the communities we serve

- Objective #1: Align focused marketing with needs assessment take aways
- Objective #2: Increase outreach in rural counties
- Objective #3: Evaluate effectiveness of marketing campaigns

#### Goal #2:

Enhance CLS' image as a trusted resource

- Objective #1: Identify strategic speaking opportunities to boost CLS' reputation
- Objective #2: Promote brand compliance
- Objective #3: Assess feedback using available technology

# Strategic Priority #4:

## Branding



**CLS will create a dynamic and empowering culture that fosters continuous learning and professional growth, leading to increased employee and Board satisfaction, retention, and overall organizational success.**



# **Strategic Priority #5:**

## **Organizational Infrastructure**

### **Goal #1:**

Attract and grow service minded staff

- Objective #1: Maintain leadership transparency with staff
- Objective #2: Create a learning environment where employees are empowered to collaborate, share knowledge and act with autonomy
- Objective #3: Develop clear performance standards and accountability mechanisms
- Objective #4: Offer competitive compensation packages aligned with performance standards
- Objective #5: Foster employee growth opportunities through educational and community engagement opportunities

### **Goal #2:**

Ensure that board members are actively involved, motivated, and contributing to CLS' mission and success

- Objective #1: Identify board member expertise and diversity and address gaps through training, education and recruitment.
- Objective #2: Refine board member roles and responsibilities to encourage active participation.





# Accountability

CLS acknowledges that successfully implementing the 2026-2030 strategic plan will demand continuous commitment from staff, board members, and other stakeholders over the next five years. To lead this effort, the current Strategic Planning Committee, in collaboration with CLS staff and other board committees, will take charge of the plan's implementation and monitoring.

While the plan outlines measurable outcomes for each strategic priority, the Leadership at CLS will also use the strategic plan to:



## DEFINE ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

The strategic plan acts similarly to core values in defining proper behavior within CLS. It sets the standard for how decisions should be made and how actions should align with CLS' mission and values.



## GUIDE DECISION-MAKING

The strategic plan helps assess opportunities to serve the community and expand in line with the CLS' focus. It guides resource distribution, ensuring they adapt to emerging issues while maintaining current The plan informs annual priorities, aligning efforts with the long-term vision.



## SUPPORT BOARD & GOVERNANCE

The strategic plan supports the board by ensuring there is adequate internal capacity to manage and guide CLS effectively. It drives the recruitment of board members, committee members and staff who are aligned with and can support CLS' strategic priorities.



## FUNDRAISING & MARKETING

The plan is also essential for developing the capacity and visibility needed for effective fundraising and marketing efforts. It ensures that these activities are aligned with the overall strategy and contribute to CLS' goals.



## Conclusion & Acknowledgements

As CLS moves forward with this strategic plan, they are dedicated to preserving the dignity of everyone they serve. By focusing on thoughtful funding and partnerships, they aim to break down barriers to civil legal aid for all people, no matter their race, gender identity, background, abilities, or financial situation. This plan lays out priorities and goals that are both practical and ambitious. By being clear about their values, they are setting expectations for who they are and invite others to work with them on this path.

CLS wants to recognize and thank the Strategic Planning Committee for their efforts:

Adrianna Tran  
Andrea Ortiz  
Carrie Rentz  
Bruce Brown  
Cassandra Brown  
Christina Russo Walters  
Danielle Harris  
Eli Mattern  
Jeff Harvey  
Jen Pollock  
Jodi Peña-Castaldi  
John Martino  
Karen Magno  
Kelly Purcell  
Kevin Ross-Andino  
Kimberly Sparks  
Matt Frey  
Michelle Seckinger  
Michelle Wargo  
Monique Keels  
Morgan Cardinal  
Nadia Soulouque  
Scott Owens  
Sherrille Akin  
Teri Kozub  
Tiernan Ramer

*Special thanks to our strategic planning consultant:*

**thredpartners**

