

ACLU North Carolina

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2025





Photo: Clay Banks via Unsplash

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I.

MISSION AND IDENTITY STATEMENT

The ACLU of North Carolina dares to create a more perfect union – beyond one person, party, or side. Our mission is to realize this promise of the United States and North Carolina Constitutions for all and expand the reach of their guarantees.

II.

VISION STATEMENT

We imagine a North Carolina that is a new model for the South, with protected and expanded civil liberties and civil rights for all, to move us closer to racial justice and abolition of the carceral state.



Photo: ACLU



Photo: Tito Texidor III via Unsplash



Photo: ACLU

III. VALUES

Our work is purposeful, intentional, and driven by our core values. We work to secure individual rights and liberties and extend them to people who have been too often excluded from their protections. Working hand-in-hand with those most impacted by government abuse and overreach, our multi-faceted approach ensures our work is participatory, legitimate, and long-lasting. Our core values anchor our work, providing a foundation that connects our staff, board, members, donors, and communities.

We stand against racist and oppressive systems.

To ensure the fundamental rights and human dignity of all North Carolinians, our work will seek to dismantle the systems and cultures that perpetuate inequity and marginalization.

We purposely center dignity, respect, and compassion for all people - utilizing both holistic and integrated advocacy.

Applying an intersectional lens and mobilizing interdisciplinary teams to our work allows us to more fully understand and more meaningfully impact our community.

We pursue radical transparency in service of accountability.

This might sometimes challenge our own assumptions and those of our allies. We are tenacious, ask questions, listen closely, take bold actions, and apply the lessons learned to achieve collective liberation.

We value and model equity, inclusivity, and grace.

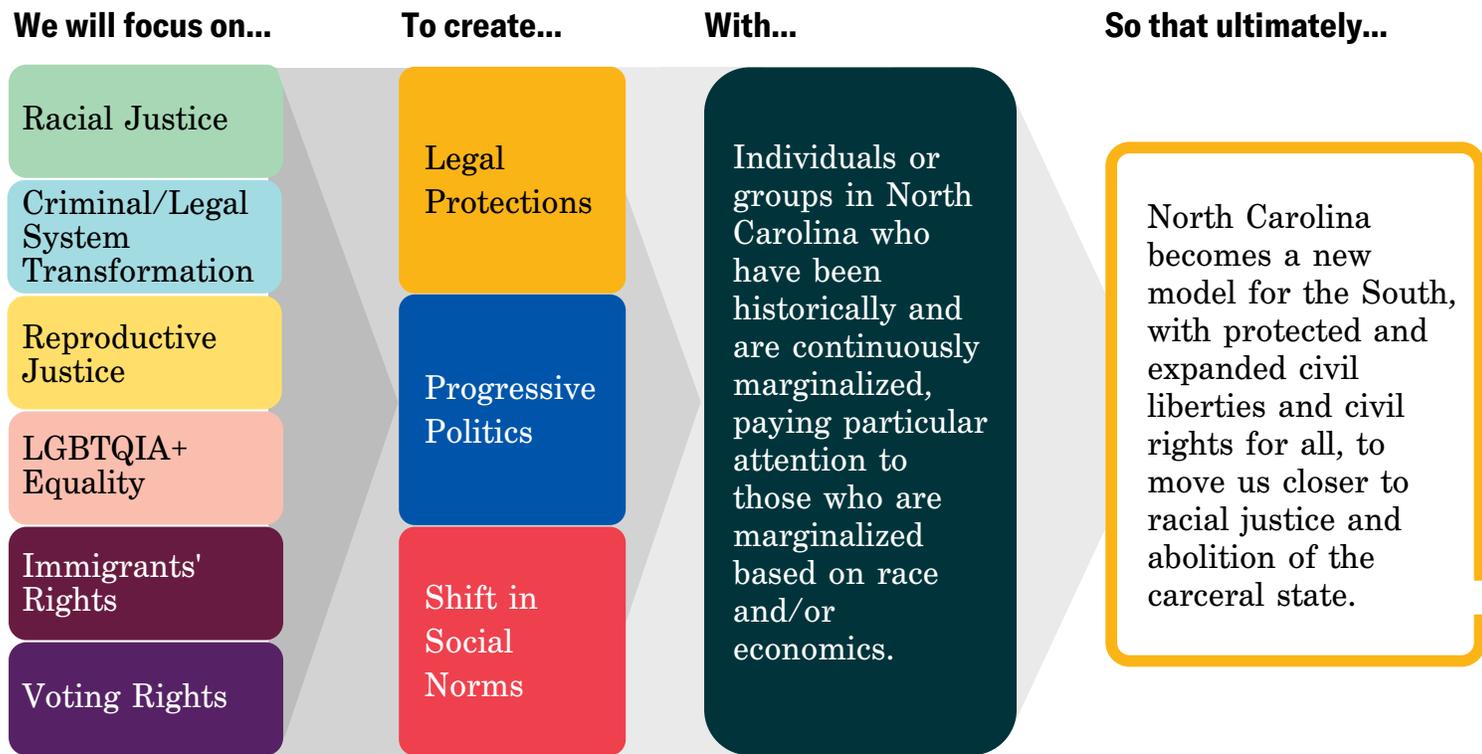
We center the experience and leadership of impacted people within our organization and the community at large in service of lasting systemic change. We work collaboratively and offer each other and our partners the grace and space to learn and grow.

We strive for both internal and community sustainability.

We honor and value the contributions of our staff, without whom there is no ACLU. We commit to creating a sustainable environment where staff can flourish and take pride in our work. We will ensure organizational sustainability, identifying and encouraging best practices to ensure our work can continue. We commit to using our resources to support and collaborate with directly impacted partners in community building efforts to make sustainable and systemic change.

IV.

OUR INTENDED IMPACT





V.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Putting our values into action shapes what our work looks like. The multi-pronged approach used to achieve our outcomes includes:



VI.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Criminal Legal System Transformation:

Reduce the number of people incarcerated in North Carolina prisons and protect and expand the rights of people who are or have been incarcerated.

- Advance transparency and accountability reforms to combat harm and abuse in law enforcement and prosecutorial systems, while advocating for the decriminalization of poverty through bail reform; fines and fees reform; and civil enforcement of local ordinances.
- Demand state leaders use clemency broadly to decarcerate North Carolina state prisons and promote educational materials that inform the public of the need and potential for decarceration.
- Develop leadership among people who have been directly impacted by the criminal legal system.
- Advocate for the abolishment of the death penalty and juvenile life without parole.

Reproductive Justice:

Ensure that individuals have the opportunity, care, and resources they need to make their own decisions about their bodies, whether and/or when to have children, and parent children in safe and sustainable communities, without fear or shame.

- Protect community members' abortion access through litigation and policy advocacy strategies that resist current and future restrictions to bodily autonomy.
- Establish and ensure robust enforcement of the policies, practices, and procedural reforms stipulated in the Dignity Act, which protects and expands the rights of pregnant people who are incarcerated and their families.
- Partner with key organizations and impacted individuals to (i) lobby against legislation seeking to limit access to reproductive health care, (ii) litigate any new laws that limit access to reproductive health care, and (iii) ensure access to available reproductive health services with publicly available information and tools, like TextAbby.

LGBTQIA+ Equality:

Fight for LGBTQIA+ legal protections, including challenging laws and policies that disproportionately criminalize LGBTQIA+ people.

- Pursue litigation and advocacy strategies to advocate for safe conditions and appropriate health care for trans and nonbinary people who are incarcerated.
- Litigate and utilize administrative complaint mechanisms to combat LGBTQIA+ discrimination in legal protections, housing, employment, education, public services, and other policies and practices that disproportionately target and harm LGBTQIA+ people, including re-entry services for formerly incarcerated LGBTQIA+ people.

Immigrants' Rights:

Stop the implementation of anti-immigrant policies at the state and local level and the erosion of immigrants' rights.

- Push for progressive pro-immigrant policies and educate voters about important issues.
- Defend against anti-immigrant proposals at the General Assembly in coalition with impacted people and organizations.
- Build leadership of the Alianza Coalition including providing opportunities for young leaders to exercise their skills.

Racial Justice:

Dismantle legislative, economic, and political systems that subject people of color to lesser quality and length of life, including housing, employment, education, and disproportionate contact with the brutalities of the criminal-legal system.

- Educate with goals to increase the public's investment in and advocacy for anti-racist policies, practices, and behaviors, including naming and challenging white supremacy when encountered
- Educate with goals to increase understanding of how current disparities and policy proposals are the legacies of enslavement and Jim Crow practices in the United States.
- Lead with race-class narratives that center and prioritize the experiences, protection, and wellness of people of color.
- Broaden advocacy campaigns to foster support for proactive and reparative legislation and practices that improves the quality and length of life for people of color.

Voting Rights:

Participate in coalitional efforts to expand voting access and combat laws and practices that would undermine a pillar of our democracy and facilitate the erosion of our democratic norms.

- Advocate through public education, lobbying, and other tools and strategies to secure the enfranchisement of people who are incarcerated, on probation, or on parole to vote.
- Use legal strategies to support voting rights advocates leading the charge against voter suppression and disenfranchisement in North Carolina.
- Collaborate with community-based organizations and impacted individuals to increase public and political support for discontinuing North Carolina's practice of disenfranchising voters based on felony convictions.

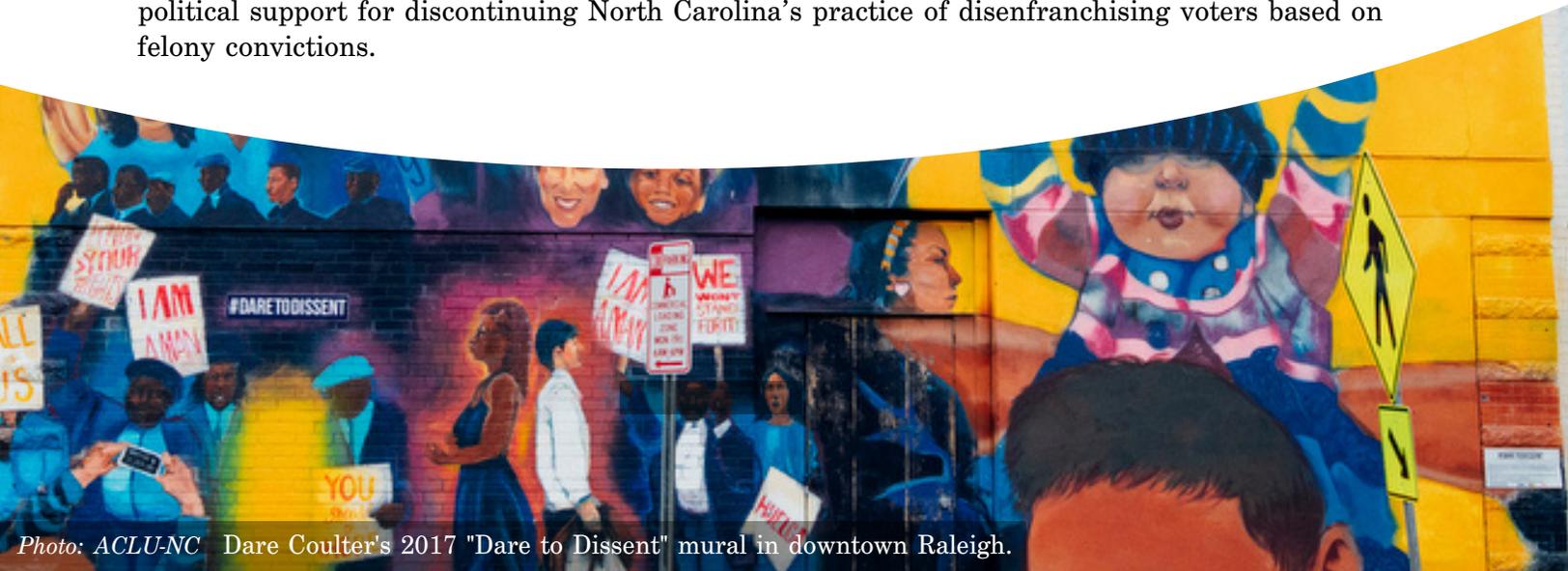


Photo: ACLU-NC Dare Coulter's 2017 "Dare to Dissent" mural in downtown Raleigh.



Photo: ACLU-NC

VII.

VISION FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Over the next three years, we will double-down on aligning our values with our core behaviors and expectations both internally and externally. We hold true to our purpose, what we pursue, and how we model inclusivity with sustainability. We will take a progressive approach to:

- Building community partnerships that advance social justice for marginalized and underrepresented groups, through the participative collaboration of resources and knowledge.
- Create opportunities for restorative collaboration that lends to cultural impact for disinvested communities.
- Employing inclusive models and strategies for all stakeholders indicative of strengthening the organization.
- Define infrastructure investment and attach metrics for intentionality, accountability, and responsible practices.
- Transform priorities to reflect an aggressive focus on centering equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Provide employment and growth opportunities that increase staff representation reflective of the community we serve.
- Be present and accountable to staff with emotional intelligence and cultural humility.

VIII.

HOW WE ARE INVESTING

To achieve the goals of this strategic plan, we will make intentional investments:

- We are building a significantly larger staff infrastructure, with growth in almost all departments and with the total number of full-time equivalent staff positions (FTEs) increasing by 50% by the start of Fiscal Year (FY) 26.
- We will build our field program to scale, such that by the end of FY25, we have the capacity to easily and quickly mobilize more than 500 volunteer activists on critical civil liberties issues. Further, we can develop relationships across a wider geographic area and in rapidly growing and politically important parts of the state.
- We will transition our communications department from a service department into a real programmatic one, uniquely well-positioned to persuade North Carolinians on civil liberties issues and shift the narrative about social norms. This requires a significantly larger department than the one that exists today and requires the recruitment of staff members with new and different skillsets.
- Developing a strategic approach to engagement and mobilization in our Policy and Advocacy department means that we will be intentional about seeking, recruiting, engaging, and energizing a supporter base that is more representative of our state's changing demographics, with special emphasis on increasing the extent to which Latinx and Black populations feel a sense of belonging with the ACLU of North Carolina.
- Recognizing that integrated advocacy is the vehicle through which we accomplish our goals, this new plan calls for coordination on our broad array of work and a guarantee of high-level cross-functional integration between the program areas and resource allocation as well as the development of programmatic evaluation tools.
- With an articulated commitment to centering the voices of impacted people, this plan requires us to use our brand and resources to invest in and support under-resourced community partners.
- A fully-staffed policy team will lead on an enhanced lobbying program that advances proactive legislative priorities, defends against problematic policies, and engages the wider community on the day-to-day impact of public policy. Further, this deeper engagement will lead to stronger relationships with elected officials who see ACLU-NC as critical voices when creating policy.





**ACLU
STANDS
WITH
YOU!**

HOW YOU CAN HELP

BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP



Join the 23,000+ North Carolinians who are dedicated to seeing the promises of the Bill of Rights fulfilled.

MAKE A MONTHLY GIFT



Join the Guardian of Liberty program and set up monthly contributions.

TAKE ACTION



Sign up for both the national ACLU and ACLU of North Carolina action alerts and reach out to your elected officials when we notify you there is an imminent threat to civil liberties.



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