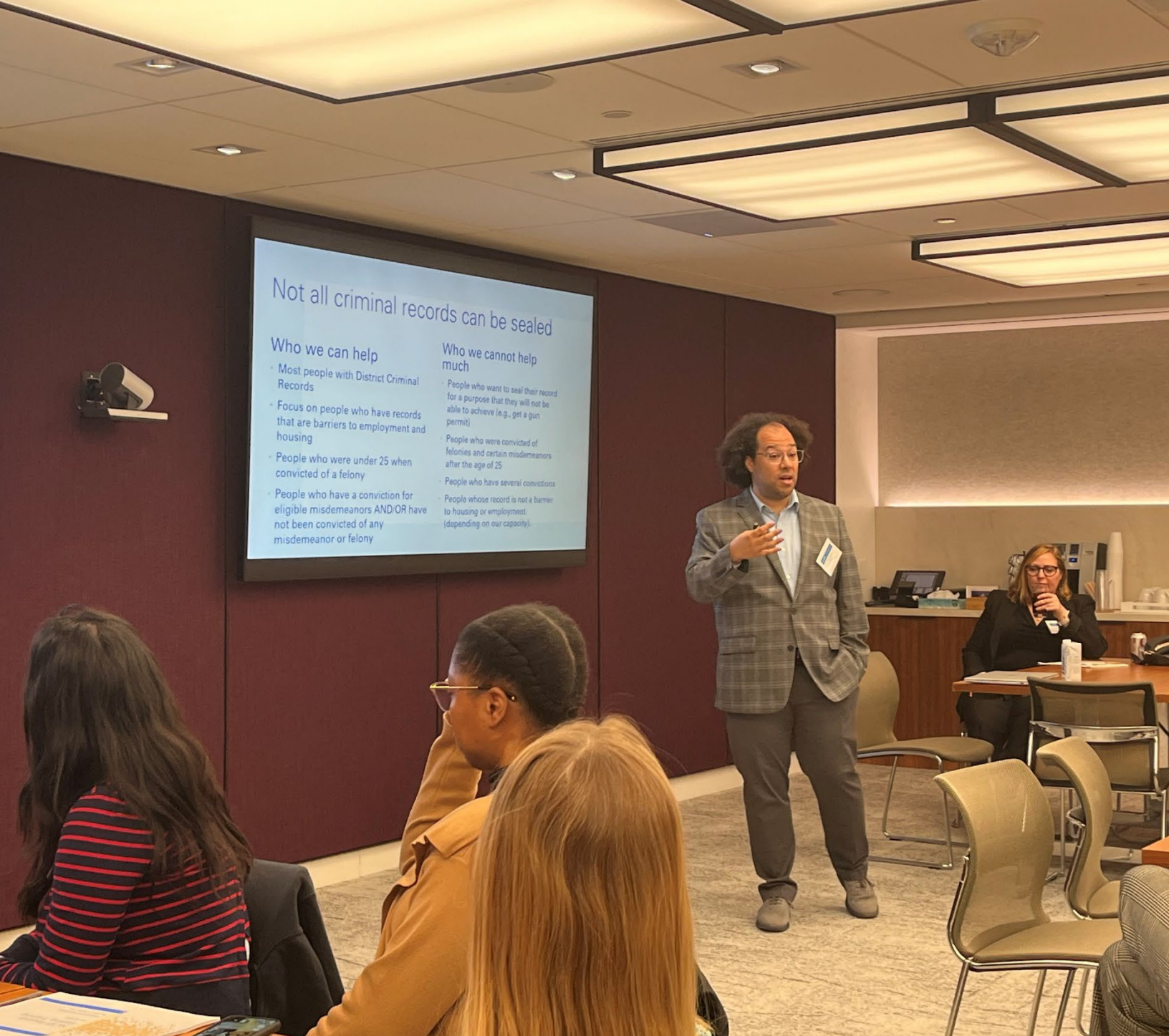




Not all criminal records can be sealed

Who we can help

- Most people with District Criminal Records
- Focus on people who have records that are barriers to employment and housing
- People who were under 25 when convicted of a felony
- People who have a conviction for eligible misdemeanors AND/OR have not been convicted of any misdemeanor or felony

Who we cannot help much

- People who want to seal their record for a purpose that they will not be able to achieve (e.g., get a gun permit)
- People who were convicted of felonies and certain misdemeanors after the age of 25
- People who have several convictions
- People whose record is not a barrier to housing or employment (depending on our capacity)

NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

2025-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN



Introduction

For 60 years, the Neighborhood Legal Services Program of the District of Columbia (NLSP) has worked tirelessly to address the legal needs of low-income residents in the District of Columbia. NLSP recognizes that our work can impact every aspect of our clients' lives, and we demonstrate our commitment to our clients every day by providing comprehensive support to address a wide array of legal needs. The hallmark of our organization is our client-centered approach, which is reflected in both our legal practice and our organizational strategy.

NLSP is committed to building a future where all residents have the resources they need to overcome legal obstacles and build brighter futures. We recognize the need for thoughtful long-term planning to ensure that this future becomes a reality. This strategic plan outlines NLSP's roadmap for continuing its mission, building upon its legacy, and deepening its impact in the years to come. It establishes a clear framework for advancing NLSP's mission by strengthening community engagement, organizational effectiveness, and long-term sustainability, ensuring the organization is well-positioned to provide high quality, client-centered legal services to those who need them most.

This strategic plan is organized around five strategic pillars that describe how NLSP will strengthen its connection to the community, expand its capacity to serve clients, enhance its visibility and reach, invest in its people and organizational culture, and sustain its mission for future generations. Each pillar is intentionally designed to support NLSP's commitment to advancing access to justice and improving outcomes for the individuals and communities we serve.

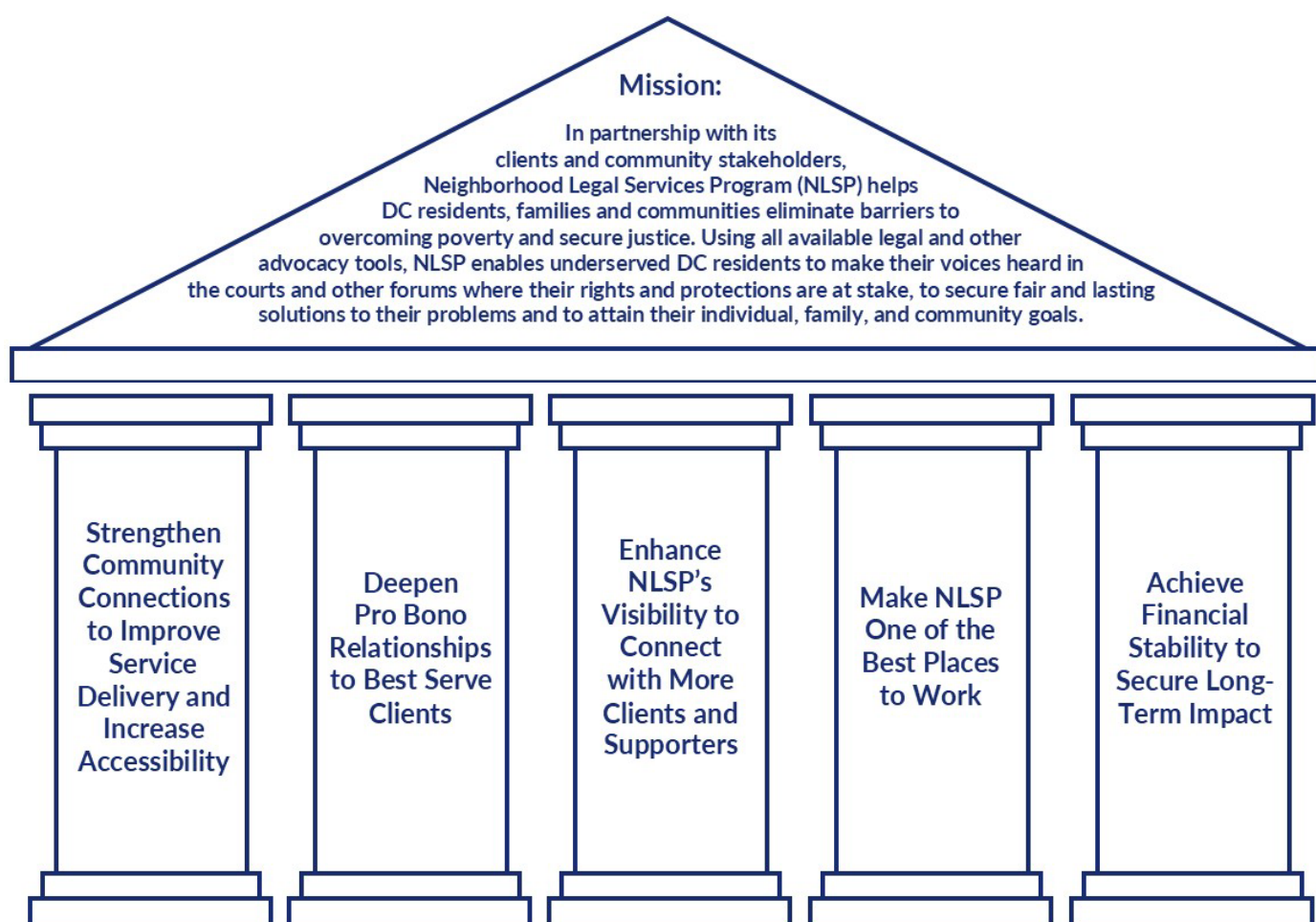
Within each pillar, strategic priorities define the outcomes NLSP seeks to achieve, while supporting strategies describe the approaches that the organization will take to advance those outcomes. Together, they provide a flexible and actionable framework for guiding decision-making, aligning organizational efforts, and measuring progress over the life of the plan. Above all, they reflect NLSP's continued commitment to its clients, staff, partners, supporters, and community.

The five pillars – **strengthening community connections, deepening pro bono services, enhancing visibility, fostering a productive workplace, and achieving financial sustainability** – are designed to advance our mission of providing lasting solutions to the legal challenges faced by low-income residents. By strengthening community relationships, investing in organizational capacity, and building a sustainable foundation for the future, we ensure that NLSP will remain ready and available to provide critical legal services to those who need them the most for many years to come.

Process

The strategic plan was created over the course of a year by NLSP's Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of leadership and staff, with the assistance of Spur Local. Throughout the process, the perspectives of community partners, clients, staff, and board members were centered. This plan builds on the organization's previous successes and defines the outcomes NLSP seeks to achieve over the next three years. This plan was modified in July of 2026 to incorporate lessons learned through its implementation.

5 Strategic Plan Pillars



Pillar 1: Strengthen Community Connections to Improve Service Delivery and Increase Accessibility

Many residents of the District of Columbia face significant barriers to accessing reliable, high quality legal services. As a neighborhood-based legal services organization, NLSP recognizes that effective advocacy begins with understanding and intentionally responding to community needs. By strengthening service delivery systems, actively seeking client and community input, and building partnerships that expand access to services, NLSP will ensure that its work remains responsive, relevant, and impactful.

NLSP is committed to delivering exceptional, client-centered legal services that are informed by community needs and strengthened through meaningful community engagement. By maintaining a deep understanding of the populations it serves and fostering trusted community partnerships, NLSP will expand access to justice and create lasting impacts for clients and communities.

Priority 1.1: NLSP staff consistently deliver outstanding legal services that reflect a deep and ongoing understanding of the needs of our client population.

1. Refine internal systems and practices for intake and case assignment to support efficient and effective service delivery.
2. Promote clear practice standards that support consistent and high quality legal representation.
3. Develop and maintain a comprehensive and ongoing understanding of community legal needs through formal needs assessment and community engagement.
4. Expand strategies for gathering client and community feedback and embedding it into our service delivery model.

Priority 1.2: NLSP engages in intentional community engagement that contributes to meaningful impacts for the communities we serve.

1. Build and sustain partnerships that expand access to services, deepen trust, and promote positive client outcomes.
 2. Sustain a consistent and visible presence in priority neighborhoods through intentional outreach and engagement.
 3. Align all community engagement efforts with clearly defined objectives that advance client outcomes and strengthen service delivery.
 4. Incorporate community and partner input into program design, priorities, and evaluation.
-

Pillar 2: Deepen Pro Bono Relationships to Best Serve Clients

NLSP's ability to meet the diverse and evolving legal needs of its clients depends on strong partnerships that expand organizational capacity and extend access to high quality legal representation. Pro bono partnerships play a critical role in ensuring that NLSP can effectively connect clients with the legal resources and expertise they need. By cultivating a strong network of pro bono partners and strategically leveraging their skills and experience, NLSP can expand its reach and offer legal assistance to more residents in need.

NLSP is committed to cultivating meaningful pro bono partnerships that strengthen its legal practice and advance positive outcomes for clients. By maintaining a robust network of engaged partners and leveraging their expertise in thoughtful and impactful ways, NLSP will broaden access to legal resources and deepen its impact in the communities it serves.

Priority 2.1: NLSP maintains a diverse and expansive network of pro bono partners who meaningfully strengthen our legal practice.

1. Engage and onboard new pro bono partners aligned with practice area needs.
2. Streamline onboarding, training, and resource systems to support high quality pro bono work.
3. Build and maintain strong relationships with pro bono partners.
4. Deepen engagement with existing partners to increase retention and impact.

Priority 2.2: NLSP strategically leverages pro bono partnerships to expand organizational capacity and improve client outcomes.

1. Assess client needs to identify opportunities for pro bono engagement and support.
 2. Leverage the expertise and relationships of pro bono partners to strengthen service delivery, client outcomes, and long-term investment in NLSP's mission.
 3. Evaluate feedback from pro bono partners to enhance the impact of the pro bono program and shape priorities.
-

Pillar 3: Enhance NLSP's Visibility to Connect with More Clients and Supporters

NLSP's ability to serve clients and sustain its impact depends in part on how effectively it communicates its mission, services, and achievements. Many potential clients, supporters, and partners are unaware of NLSP and its impact on the communities it serves. By elevating client stories, highlighting organizational impact, and showcasing the expertise of its staff, NLSP can strengthen its visibility, reinforce its role as a trusted community resource, and foster the relationships necessary to advance access to justice.

NLSP is committed to maintaining a strong and authentic presence that increases awareness of its services, impact, and expertise among clients, partners, and supporters. By communicating consistently and intentionally, NLSP will elevate its impact and foster lasting engagement with those who support its mission.

Priority 3.1: NLSP implements a coordinated marketing and communications strategy that consistently amplifies our impact, visibility, and reach.

1. Develop a cohesive communications strategy that aligns programmatic and development efforts.
2. Modernize digital platforms, including the website, to reflect NLSP's work and impact.
3. Elevate staff expertise and organizational success through public engagement opportunities such as publications and speaking engagements.

Priority 3.2: NLSP is recognized as a trusted and visible resource for legal assistance, community partnership, and access to justice in the District of Columbia.

1. Share client stories, organizational accomplishments, and programmatic impact through coordinated communications efforts.
 2. Highlight staff expertise and organizational leadership through publications, presentations, coalitions, and other public-facing opportunities.
 3. Ensure public-facing materials consistently communicate NLSP's mission, services, and impact.
-

Pillar 4: Make NLSP One of the Best Places to Work

NLSP's ability to deliver high quality legal services depends on the strength of its people, systems, and organizational culture. To become one of the best places to work, NLSP must ensure that staff have the support, resources, and operational infrastructure necessary to serve clients effectively. By investing in its workforce, strengthening organizational systems, and creating meaningful opportunities for staff engagement, NLSP will enhance its capacity to serve clients, adapt to change, and sustain its impact over time.

NLSP is committed to making the organization one of the best places to work by fostering an environment where staff are supported, empowered, and equipped to succeed. By investing in strong systems and a culture that values collaboration and staff input, NLSP will strengthen its ability to attract, support, and retain the talented professionals who make its mission possible.

Priority 4.1: NLSP operates with efficient, effective, and well-coordinated systems and infrastructure that consistently support high quality service delivery.

1. Regularly assess administrative and operational processes to identify opportunities for increased effectiveness and efficiency.
2. Streamline and standardize policies and workflows across departments to improve consistency and effectiveness.
3. Implement systems and tools that enhance coordination, data monitoring, and organizational performance.

Priority 4.2: NLSP staff are supported, empowered, and equipped with the tools and resources necessary to meet the diverse and evolving legal needs of our clients.

1. Strengthen recruitment pipelines through partnerships with law schools, universities, and professional networks.
2. Implement strategies that promote retention, professional development, and staff well-being.
3. Ensure staff have access to the training, tools, and resources needed to adapt to emerging client needs.

Priority 4.3: NLSP fosters a workplace culture in which staff input is actively sought, valued, and consistently considered as a part of organizational decision-making and practice.

1. Promote meaningful opportunities for staff to contribute ideas and feedback on organizational decisions.
 2. Strengthen communication channels between staff and leadership outside of formal meetings.
 3. Incorporate staff perspectives into operational and programmatic decision-making, where appropriate.
-

Pillar 5: Achieve Financial Sustainability to Secure Long-Term Impact

NLSP's ability to achieve its mission over the long-term depends on a strong financial foundation and effective organizational governance. To achieve sustainability, the organization must maintain the financial resources and oversight necessary to sustain and strengthen its services. By diversifying funding sources, strengthening donor relationships, and fostering active Board engagement, NLSP can build a more resilient organization that is prepared to serve District residents for many years to come.

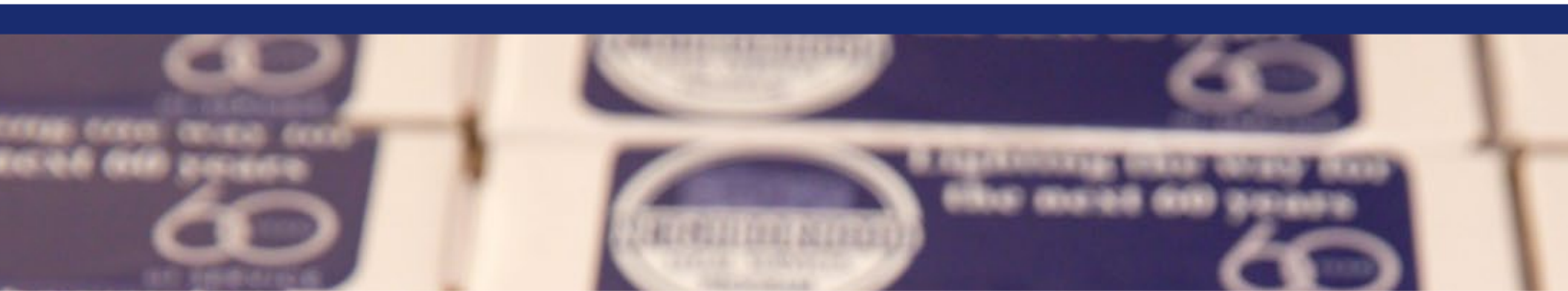
NLSP is committed to building the financial strength and governance capacity necessary to sustain its mission and maximize its impact. Through diversified funding, responsible stewardship of resources, and engaged organizational leadership, NLSP will remain a trusted and enduring resource for the communities it serves.

Priority 5.1: NLSP has a diversified and resilient funding model supported by strong donor engagement, intentional budgeting processes, and effective stewardship practices.

1. Expand and stabilize individual giving to build a reliable base of support.
2. Modernize fundraising systems and infrastructure to support donor engagement and organizational resilience.
3. Deepen donor relationships through intentional stewardship and engagement.
4. Align fundraising planning and stewardship efforts with organizational priorities through intentional cross-functional collaboration.

Priority 5.2: NLSP maintains a stable financial foundation and strong governance structure, supported by an actively engaged Board of Directors providing strategic oversight.

1. Establish and maintain financial reserves and policies that support long-term stability.
 2. Strengthen Board and internal governance practices to support effective oversight, accountability, and strategic alignment.
 3. Clarify and expand Board roles in fundraising, financial stewardship, and organizational leadership.
 4. Implement a comprehensive Board engagement strategy to support active and meaningful participation.
-



With this strategic plan, NLSP is positioned to deepen its impact, ensuring that it remains a vital legal resource for DC residents. Through strengthened community engagement, enhanced pro bono services, an elevated marketing strategy, a supportive work environment, and financial sustainability, NLSP is poised to continue advancing access to justice for years to come.

