

# ACLU OF DELAWARE'S 2022-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

**Friends,**

We are at an inflection point in our nation's history. With attacks on the very foundations of our democracy coupled with the urgent need to address systemic and historic racism, these problems can feel overwhelming and progress can feel elusive. That is why it is even more critical today that the ACLU of Delaware set out a focused and ambitious strategic plan, to guide us over the next three years of unprecedented challenges and opportunities.

**This strategic plan includes five priority planks:**

- 1: Securing our right to vote;**
- 2: Ending mass incarceration;**
- 3: Ensuring every child receives a quality and equitable education;**
- 4: Growing our capacity—particularly in litigation, our presence in southern Delaware, and outreach to the Latinx community; and**
- 5: Living our values of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.**

We invite you to learn more about each of our goals in this report and to display the artwork we've included on the last page from Amir Campbell, a Delaware artist, in your home or office (or share it with a friend!). We are energized and optimistic about what is possible over the next three years. Thank you for your support in helping us make a more just and equitable Delaware.

In solidarity,

**Mike Brickner**

*Executive Director, ACLU-DE*

**Kathleen Epler**

*President, ACLU-DE*

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## MISSION

Since 1961, the ACLU of Delaware has worked to defend and expand civil liberties across the First State. Over the years, we've played key roles in landmark litigation and vital legislation to ensure the constitutional rights of all Delawareans.

The mission of the ACLU of Delaware is to preserve and advance civil liberties and civil rights in the State of Delaware as enshrined in the United States and Delaware Constitutions through education and advocacy without consideration of political association.

**Thank you to the members of the strategic planning committee who led our work to develop this plan:**

**Desmond Baker | Rachel Blumenfeld | Mike Brickner | Kathleen Epler | Ariel Gruswitz | Mark Purpura | Javonne Rich**



*Photo: Dan Dennis, Unsplash*

## GOAL 1: SECURING OUR RIGHT TO VOTE

**Every issue that you care about is impacted by one simple action: your vote.**

We may not always like the candidates in our elections, and we may disagree with the choices some other Delawareans make when they vote, but we can all agree that every vote should count and the process of voting should be simple, safe and secure.

We believe that our communities deserve a democracy that works for us. **That's why one of our strategic goals is to ensure that all Delawareans may cast an informed ballot freely and fairly.**

**Here's how we'll achieve this goal:**

- 1** Achieve a constitutional amendment to allow all eligible Delaware voters to cast a ballot by mail.
- 2** Ensure Delaware voters are empowered with knowledge of how their vote will impact critical civil liberties issues.
- 3** Dismantle barriers that have historically disenfranchised segments of our community, e.g., those involved with the justice system, Black and brown voters, people with disabilities, and young voters.





Photo: Sean Dwyer, Delaware Center for Justice

## GOAL 2: ENDING MASS INCARCERATION

Our justice system — from policing to probation — disproportionately impacts communities of color and perpetuates systemic racism through decades of tough-on-crime policies.

**Our strategic goal to reduce the prison population by 50 percent and reduce racial disparities in the justice system will address these ongoing systemic issues.**

**Here's how we'll achieve this goal:**

- 1** Ensure law enforcement operates transparently and with community oversight, while reducing the role of police in community matters better handled by social or other services.
- 2** Transform Delaware's probation system to ensure that people are supported in the community and recidivism is reduced.
- 3** Reduce the collateral sanctions people with arrest and conviction records face when accessing employment, housing, and educational opportunities.
- 4** End modern-day debtors' prisons caused by the unfair imposition of fines and fees on indigent people.



# GOAL 3: ENSURING EVERY CHILD RECEIVES A QUALITY AND EQUITABLE EDUCATION

**Every student in Delaware deserves a great education.**

Well-educated students are the foundation of our state's success, but a well-rounded education isn't guaranteed to every student in Delaware. Funding, equity, and disparity issues all contribute to an education system that has been leaving children behind for decades.

**One of our strategic goals is to ensure that Delaware delivers on the promise of a fair and equitable education for all children. Here's how we'll achieve that:**

- 1** Reduce barriers to engagement for parents and students, particularly those from communities who historically have had low levels of participation, so they may be active participants in decision-making at the school and district level.
- 2** Ensure the use of Opportunity Funds is transparent, effective, and responsive to community needs.
- 3** End the school-to-prison pipeline by reducing the use of detention, suspension and arrest, especially against Black, brown, and disabled students.

*Photo: Jeswin Thomas, Unsplash*



## GOAL 4: GROWING OUR CAPACITY

### **We can't do this work alone.**

In order to protect and expand civil liberties in Delaware, we must connect with all of Delaware's communities. Building relationships with communities, especially those in Kent and Sussex counties, is vital to ensuring that our work reaches every corner of our state. Part of developing deeper relationships in southern Delaware must include increasing our presence with Latinx communities, which have grown rapidly in recent years.

We also know that the demands for legal strategies to defend and expand civil liberties grow every day, meaning we must increase our legal capacity. All of this is only possible if we fortify our fundraising infrastructure and have a cadre of volunteers by our side.

**That's why growing our capacity — particularly in litigation, our presence in southern Delaware, and outreach to the Latinx community — is one of our strategic goals.**

### **Here's how we'll accomplish that:**

- 1** Strengthen our connections and partnerships with the Latinx community.
- 2** Increase and/or diversify philanthropic revenues and volunteer engagement.
- 3** Strengthen our capacity for litigation through expanded relationships with cooperating attorneys and utilization of national ACLU attorney partnerships.
- 4** Establish expanded staff presence and engagement in southern Delaware.



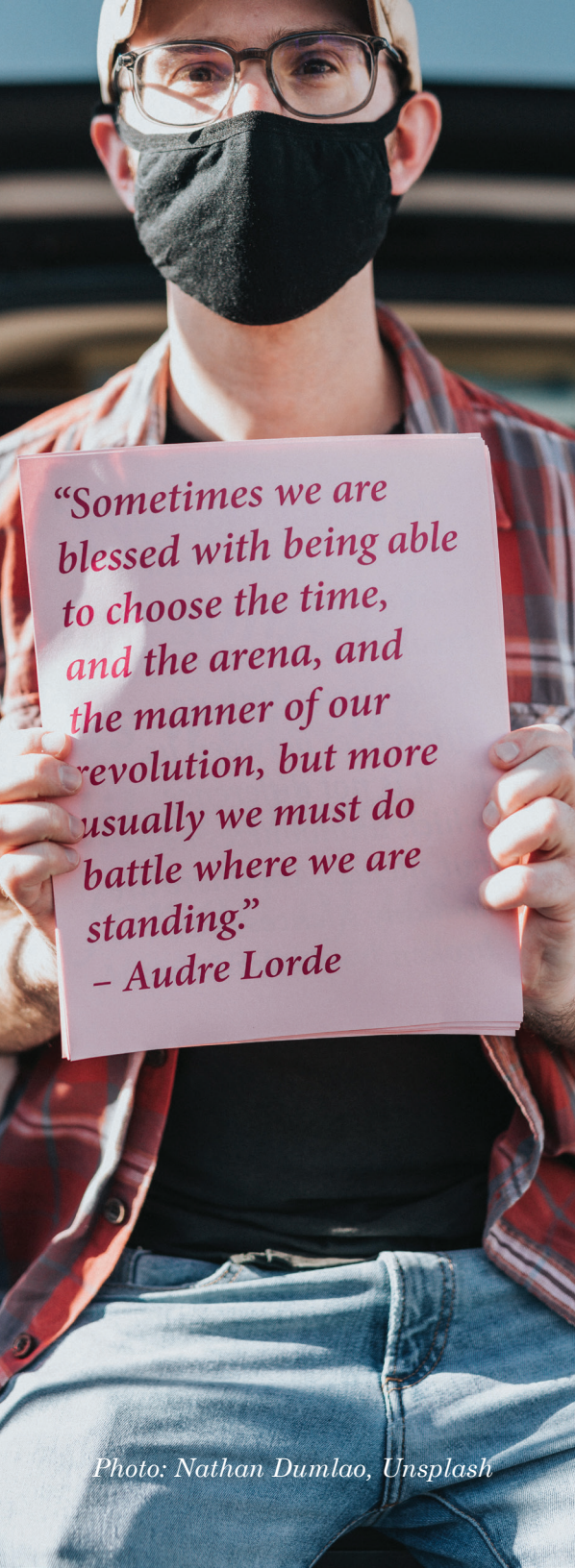


Photo: Nathan Dumlao, Unsplash

## GOAL 5: LIVING OUR VALUES OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING

**We strive to create a safe and inclusive environment for our staff, board, and community partners.**

In order to fully realize our organization's mission, we must continually educate ourselves and actively work to dismantle systems of racism, oppression, and division that create barriers to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging. This work is integral toward ensuring that the ACLU-DE supports our broader community to thrive, and that we are equipped to fully eradicate barriers that have kept all Delawareans from prosperity and justice.

**To meet our strategic goal of ensuring our effectiveness as a community of board and staff members working together in pursuit of our mission, we will:**

- 1** Ensure that our Board of Directors is representative of the communities we serve.
- 2** More effectively utilize the skills, talents and resources of our board members.
- 3** Strengthen relationships between and among board and staff.
- 4** As an organization, more fully embody our values of social justice and racial equity.





ART BY:

# AMIR CAMPBELL

Amir Campbell is a Delaware-based artist specializing in paintings.

**Learn more about Amir and see more of their artwork at [www.amiraclearts.com](http://www.amiraclearts.com).**

Know a Delaware artist who would love to be featured in future ACLU-DE projects? Send them our way: [mkelly@aclu-de.org](mailto:mkelly@aclu-de.org).

**ACLU**  
Delaware