



**INLAND EMPIRE**  
Latino Lawyers Association, Inc.

## **Strategic Plan Alignment & Program Impact**

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# IELLA Mission Statement

**The mission of IELLA** is to provide free, high quality legal services and access to justice to low-income residents of the Inland Empire through our panel of attorneys and other volunteers in family law, landlord-tenant law, restraining orders, collections and other areas of civil law.

## Mission Statement Comparisons (Peers)

- **Public Counsel (LA):**  
*“Public Counsel fights for justice for children and youth, veterans, immigrants, and other vulnerable communities by providing free legal services and advocating for systemic change.”*
- **Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA):**  
*“To achieve equal justice for people living in poverty across Greater Los Angeles.”*
- **Bay Area Legal Aid:**  
*“BayLegal’s mission is to provide meaningful access to the civil justice system through quality legal assistance regardless of a client’s location, language, or disability.”*

Each emphasizes **impact, justice, and values**, rather than just listing services.

# IELLA Vision Statement

IELLA Legal Aid Clinic strives to provide all individuals meaningful access to the legal system. We mobilize attorneys and other volunteers to provide assistance to those in need to empower them to advocate for their legal rights.

In the Inland Empire, many people cannot afford an attorney, even when faced with life-altering circumstances involving legal issues. IELLA's objective is to be a lifeline to assist low-income residents of all of our communities in the areas of family law, landlord-tenant law, restraining orders, collections and other qualifying civil law matters.

## Vision Statement Comparisons (Peers)

- **Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA):**  
*"A world where everyone has equal access to justice, regardless of their income."*
- **Bay Area Legal Aid:**  
*"A society where everyone, regardless of income, is treated with dignity and has equal access to justice."*
- **Neighborhood Legal Services of LA:**  
*"To ensure justice for all by transforming lives through legal advocacy."*

**These are concise, values-driven, and speak to the kind of world or system the organization is working to create.**

# Strategic Goals & Core Values

1. **Show respect to all clients, staff, and volunteers**
  - All those affiliated with IELLA deserve and will receive respectful treatment
2. **Remain community oriented**
  - Gauge local needs and desires for volunteer legal services through community engagement
  - Retain flexibility in expanding or changing the types of services provided, to respond to community needs, as funding allows
  - Serve as much of the Inland Empire as allowed by financial constraints, including potential expansion to the Coachella Valley and High Desert
3. **Maintain and increase client satisfaction**
  - Expand client access to justice by using technology (Zoom, virtual meetings, DocuSign)
  - Invite client input and respond to suggestions and concerns
4. **Increase outreach and number of clients served**
  - Community outreach via events, local officials, bar associations, law firms, nonprofits, educational institutions, and consulates

# Strategic Goals & Core Values

## **5. Maintain and increase the Volunteer Panel (attorneys and others)**

- Recruit value-aligned attorneys and students from local firms and universities
- Offer MCLE and training
- Stay connected with former Board members and volunteers

## **6. Observe the highest ethical standards**

- Maintain strong ethics and invite feedback for improvement

## **7. Ensure board retention and recruitment**

- Recruit mission-driven Board members
- Offer robust training for volunteers and Board

# Strategic Goals & Core Values

## **8. Maintain IELLA's financial health**

- Active fundraising and diversified grant development
- Board and ED focused on financial compliance and strategy

## **9. Hire and retain a talented, diverse, and adaptive workforce**

- Evaluate staff regularly and meaningfully
- Provide training to staff, Board, and volunteers

## #2 – Remain community oriented

*Retain flexibility in expanding or changing the types of services provided. Serve as much of the Inland Empire as allowed by financial constraints.*

- IELLA continues to expand across the Inland Empire while operating within fiscal constraints.
- Clinics are now strategically located to reach rural and underserved communities, including the Coachella Valley, where poverty rates exceed 40% in some towns.
- Remote service delivery enables sustainable access to legal help for both clients and volunteers.
- We are prioritizing deeper legal resolution (e.g., QDROs), going beyond brief advice to meet real needs.
- In alignment with State Bar guidance, IELLA now has dedicated in-house attorney supervision to ensure quality and compliance.
- Our pro bono structure has evolved, with clear workflows, training, and support to enhance volunteer impact.

## #3 Maintain and increase client satisfaction

*Expand client access to justice by using technology.*

- **24/7 Online Access:** Clients can now initiate services any time through our online intake site.
- **Responsive Communication:** Our shared info@iellaaid.org inbox is monitored daily by staff and volunteers, ensuring no client inquiry is missed.
- **Flexible Consultation Options:** In-person and phone consultations are offered, with volunteer attorneys adapting to client work schedules and responsibilities—making this the most accessible option for many.
- **Accessibility for All Clients:** Clients with disabilities or special needs are supported through tailored accommodations, whether via in-person meetings or assistive technology.
- **Reduced Transportation Burdens:** Clients no longer need to travel multiple times or take time off work. Documents are delivered by email and text, with support available for those without printers or digital access.



# #3 Maintain and increase client satisfaction

*Invite client input and respond to suggestions and concerns.*

## **Data-Driven Insights & Client Feedback**

**Executive Fellowship Capstone:** Focused on building a sustainable data infrastructure to elevate the client voice and guide IELLA's strategic direction.

**Client Surveys:** Automatically sent at case closure to gather real-time feedback on service quality and user experience.

**Outcome Tracking:** Interns and a USC Social Work student follow up on long-term case outcomes to assess impact beyond case closure.

## **Listen4Good Partnership**

- Funded by Blue Shield; supported by a dedicated project manager (valued at \$8,000)
- 9-month initiative to collect, analyze, and act on client feedback
- Will result in a detailed **Impact Report** to support data-informed board decisions

## **Our Goal**

Use client feedback not just to evaluate—but to improve service design, enhance program quality, and better align services with community needs.

## #4 Increase outreach and number of clients served

*Continue robust community outreach through participation in community events, interactions with local government officials, bar associations, law firms, partnerships with other nonprofits, educational institutions, consulates and other sources of potential clients*

### Strategic Collaborations

- **Mutual client pipelines create continuity and improve long-term outcomes.**
- Legal clinics hosted in partnership with the Consulate of Guatemala.
- University partnerships with UCR, CSUSB, Cal State Long Beach, USC, and University of Redlands—supporting clinic staffing, outreach, and impact research.
- Strong government relationships with Assemblymembers, Senators, Board of Supervisors, and city officials—many of whom actively promote and support IELLA’s work.

### Targeting Underserved Regions

- Inland Empire poverty rate: **23.5%**
- Coachella Valley towns like Mecca, Oasis, and Thermal face **poverty rates exceeding 45%**
- IELLA responds through remote and in-person service expansion where traditional legal aid is scarce.
- Technology removes barriers like distance, lost wages, and limited transit.

## #5 Maintain and increase the Volunteer Panel (Attorneys and Others)

*Maximize the availability, quality and effectiveness of the services provided by IELLA. Retain contact with former Board members and volunteers.*

### **Infrastructure First: Built to Last**

- Streamlined Legal Server intake process ensures smooth case assignment and volunteer tracking
- Standardized training workflows for all pro bono attorneys and interns
- Structured onboarding for interns and PAI (Private Attorney Involvement) to reduce staff burden
- Interns support administrative workflows, freeing up staff for direct client service

### **Technology Expands Volunteer Capacity**

- Secure file sharing and remote supervision increase flexibility for volunteers
- Centralized systems now support document review, training access, and case management continuity

### **Volunteer Retention Through Support**

- On-demand CLE credit via PLI encourages continued engagement
- Personalized onboarding and shadowing experiences set new volunteers up for success
- Structured mentorship pathways keep volunteers engaged and supported

### **Long-Term Relationship Building**

- Maintain active engagement with former board members and volunteers as part of IELLA's growing network of advocates and supporters.

## #6 Observe the highest ethical standards

*Consistently maintain and implement high ethical standards, and seek input from clients, staff and volunteers regarding improvements*

- IELLA maintains strict quality and ethical standards across all legal work and volunteer involvement.
- We seek ongoing input from **clients, staff, and volunteers** to identify opportunities for improvement and uphold accountability.
- Our in-house staff attorney and Family Law Specialist Volunteer provide rigorous supervision, mentorship, and training to ensure clients receive the highest standard of care.
- All Intake and Outreach Coordinators are trained as paralegals and receive the same legal training materials as pro bono attorneys—ensuring consistency and competence at every level.
- Staff are held to high professional expectations when it comes to both legal accuracy and client compassion.
- IELLA's legal work is never rushed or reduced—**every case is approached with care, integrity, and respect for due process.**

## #7 Ensure board retention and recruitment

*Actively seek and solicit new Board members with a desire to help those in need. Provide a robust training program for volunteers and board members.*

- IELLA is cultivating a **mission-driven, regionally representative board** that reflects the diversity and needs of the communities we serve.
- Our **selection and onboarding process is now intentional and strategic**, with new members recruited for specific expertise and geographic representation.
- **Board Agreements** establish clear expectations and align members with IELLA's mission, values, and compliance responsibilities.

As part of IELLA's ongoing governance evolution, the board is now thoughtfully considering:

- The implementation of term limits to support leadership renewal
  - A reaffirmation of the importance of adhering to our existing bylaws, and
  - Beginning conversations around bylaw amendments to reflect the organization's current structure and strategic direction
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- A newly established Emeritus Board offers a pathway for long-serving members to stay engaged while making room for new leadership.
  - Board members are now connected to OneJustice and regularly encouraged to participate in free, high-quality board trainings to strengthen their capacity and deepen their understanding of legal aid governance.

## #8 Maintain IELLA's financial health

*Maintain an active fundraising program. Consistently seek to expand grant and other sources of funding. Focus on financial issues by Board and Executive Director. Ensure compliance with funder requirements*

### **Funding Opportunities:**

- We continue to maintain a diversified fundraising strategy—actively pursuing grants, partnerships, and other sources of support.
- Targeting grant opportunities focused on rural justice, technology access, and community empowerment.
- Amid increased competition (e.g., LASSB's regional expansion), IELLA stands out by tying legal services to vital conditions and social determinants of health.

### **What Funders Value Now**

- Clear, demonstrated outcomes
- Infrastructure to scale services effectively
- Connection to social and economic health outcomes
- Systems-level solutions—not just case volume

### **Strategic Resource Allocation**

- Investments in technology infrastructure to support remote legal services and hybrid staffing
- Ongoing training for staff and volunteers in virtual service delivery and modern legal aid tools
- Emphasis on data collection and reporting to demonstrate measurable community impact

## #9 Hire and Retain a talented, diverse, engaged and adaptive workforce committed to organizational excellence and an exceptional work environment

- IELLA's ability to deliver high-quality services depends on our capacity to attract and retain skilled, mission-driven staff.
- While we operate on a significantly leaner budget than peer legal aid organizations, our impact remains strong and community-centered.

Organization	Work Policy	Budget Size	Notes
ICLS	4-day, fully remote	~\$30M	Offers full-time benefits & highly competitive pay
RLA	Hybrid (min. 1 WFH)	~\$3M	Work policies vary by practice area
LASSB	Nearly fully remote	~\$5M	In-office optional for senior attorneys
IELLA	Hybrid + Flex Hours	~\$300K	Delivers comparable impact with far fewer resources

- IELLA has **lost strong staff to better-funded organizations**, but remains committed to retention through:
  - Hybrid work as a strategic perk
  - Flexibility (9am–3pm schedules) to promote balance
  - Strong mission alignment that attracts values-driven professionals

# How IELLA Stays Competitive — Even With a Limited Budget

- Salaries have been adjusted to remain regionally competitive within available resources.
- Hybrid work is offered strategically, not as a default, allowing flexibility while maintaining team cohesion and accountability.
- IELLA retains talent not just through compensation, but through mission-driven culture:
  - Staff often support clients with complex cases turned away by other legal aid providers
  - Staff are empowered to prioritize impact and empathy over speed



# Staff & Budget Overview (2020–2025)

## 2020

- Total Budget: \$575,077
- Estimated Personnel: 11
- Cases Closed: 888

**+36.7% growth from 2020**

## 2021

- Total Budget: \$786,050
- Estimated Personnel: 12
- Cases Closed: 1,346

**-36.6% drop in funding from 2021**

## 2022

- Total Budget: \$498,283
- Estimated Personnel: 9
- Cases Closed: 834

**-24.2% decrease from 2022**

## 2023

- Total Budget: \$377,661
- Estimated Personnel: 10
- Cases Closed: 644

**-19.7% decrease from 2023**

## 2024

- Total Budget: \$303,350
- Estimated Personnel: 7
- Cases Closed: 669

## 2025

- IOLTA – \$201,642
- Equal Access Fund (EAF) – \$25,240
- SBX1 – \$25,000
- CIELO 2025 – \$15,000
- 2024 CDBG (City of Riverside, to be spent by June 30) – \$7,000
- City of Redlands – \$8,000 (April- December)

**Total Confirmed Grant Funding: \$281,882**

## Historic Underspending vs. New Capacity

- \$87,525 returned in 2022 pre-infrastructure
- \$20,155 returned in 2024 for 2021–2023 HP2 grant
- EAF Carryover in 2024 (2022–23): \$120K spent down in just 4 months
  - Only \$4K returned = **96.6% spend-down rate**

# Current IELLA Staff & Roles (2025)

## Executive Director (Full-Time)

- Manages grants, compliance, fundraising, board relations, HR, and strategic partnerships
- Leads operations, financial oversight, and long-term planning

## Staff Attorney (Part-Time)

- Provides legal supervision, training, and mentorship across all case types
- Oversees pro bono panel, reviews filings, supports legal strategy, and ensures compliance

## Legal Support Interns (3 rotating, 8–10 hrs/week each)

- Assist with document handling, intake follow-up, feedback collection, and administrative support
- Extend staff capacity across intake, data entry, and client communication

## Lead Intake & Outreach Coordinator (Part-Time) ~24-26 hrs/week

- Oversees intake site and case assignments
- Runs data reports, manages clinic scheduling, supports compliance
- Functions as a case manager, coordinating follow-up and cross-program tracking

## Intake & Outreach Coordinator (2, Part-Time) ~24-26 hrs/week

- Serve as trained paralegals assisting with case prep, client interaction, and documentation
- Support attorneys and pro bono volunteers; coordinate logistics for legal clinics

# 2024 Organizational Highlights

## Highest Efficiency Per Dollar

IELLA closed **220 cases per \$100,000** in budget—its most financially efficient year in five years of reporting.

## Lean Team, Strong Output

With just 7 staff (1.81 FTE) and a modest budget of **\$303,350**, IELLA closed 669 cases, exceeding 2023 output.

## Strategic Use of Carryover

IELLA leveraged carryover funds from **2022 and 2023** to extend service delivery across 4 months in 2024—bridging funding gaps without disruption to clients.

## Cost Containment = Stability

Operational costs were strategically reduced while preserving staffing and clinic output, positioning IELLA for greater long-term sustainability.

## No Drop in Mission Delivery

Despite reduced funding, core services—especially in **family law and expungements**—remained fully active, serving high-need populations referred by Riverside Legal Aid, LASSB and ICLS.

# **Volunteer Panel & Scaling:**

Intake systems + volunteer support = efficient growth readiness

## **What's Different Now**

### **1. Infrastructure in Place**

- Streamlined intake workflows and Legal Server upgrades
- Staff and interns trained to support efficient case assignment and pro bono coordination

### **2. Structured Volunteer Support (PAI)**

- Clear onboarding guides, shadowing, and CLE pathways
- Tech-enabled tools for document review, case access, and communication
- Pro bono portal with tracked assignments and integrated supervision

### **3. Volunteer Retention Tools**

- Hybrid and flexible scheduling for busy professionals
- Built-in mentorship opportunities and skill-building support
- Volunteers can clearly see their impact on client outcomes, not just task completion

# Adaptive Clinics & Statewide Policy Wins

## Clinic Strategy Adjusted:

- Low clinic attendance due to fear, political climate, and high no-show rates
  - Solution: Shift toward walk-in and trusted community-based locations, which have proven more reliable
- Now offering:
  - Weekly walk-ins at IELLA's Riverside HQ
  - Alternating monthly Wednesday evening clinics at Jurupa Valley Reach Out
  - Monthly City of Redlands (steady flow)
  - Bi-monthly Saturday Clinics with ICIJ and the Guatemalan Consulate in San Bernardino

**Previous Burden:** IELLA had to report **30 pro bono attorneys or 1,000 hours per county**—a major hurdle for a small, resource-limited organization

IELLA helped advocate for a change to the State Bar rule. **New Standard:** Organizations now meet compliance if **volunteer hours exceed staff hours**, regardless of number of volunteers.

## Result:

- Greater flexibility for small orgs
- More meaningful volunteer integration
- Sustained access to funding through achievable benchmarks

# What We Need From Our Board

To sustain IELLA's momentum and expand our impact, we ask that board members:

- Continue recruiting volunteer attorneys—your networks matter
- Support funding growth by making introductions to private donors, law firms, and foundations
- Engage in the upcoming mission and bylaw refresh (2026) to align governance with IELLA's current vision and scope
- Help recruit new board members who bring geographic, professional, and lived experience diversity aligned with IELLA's strategic direction