



LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO THE ELDERLY

2022–2026 Strategic Plan

Highlights

Our Vision

Justice for all San Francisco seniors and adults with disabilities.

Our Mission

To protect and advance the right of San Francisco's seniors and adults with disabilities to be housed, healthy, financially stable, and safe.



Our Unique Core Competencies and Approach

We are legally brave. We value this, we encourage it, and we invest in it.

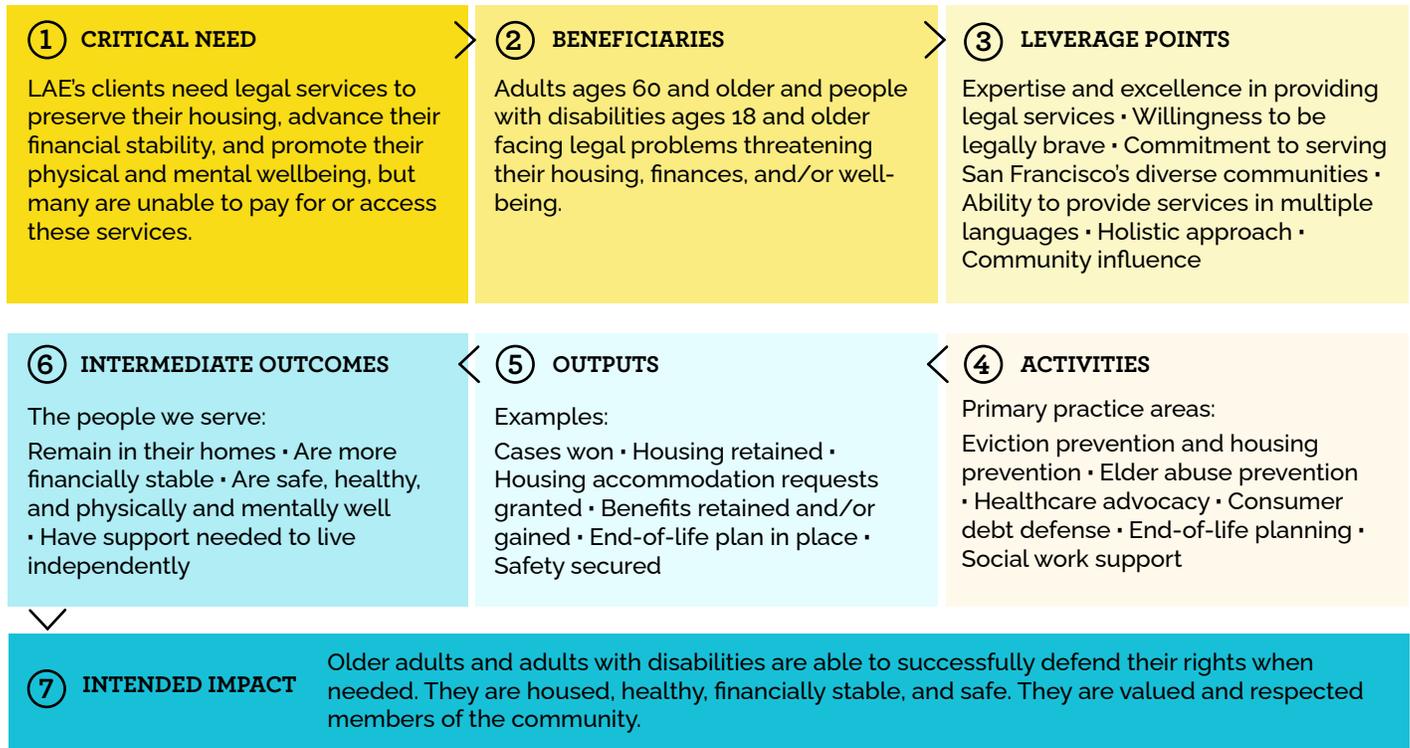
We are the only legal services organization in San Francisco that **exclusively serves older adults and people with disabilities**. This vulnerable population of San Franciscans deserves specialized services and fierce advocates who know how to navigate the legal system and protect their right to live with independence and dignity. Because we are experienced litigators, we are willing to push our cases to trial when needed and to develop innovative legal arguments that advance justice for our clients.

Our committed staff of 17 attorneys provides the **highest quality of legal services**, with over 220 years of combined law practice. Our holistic approach to our mission is key to the effectiveness of our services. Because our attorneys work closely and collaboratively, they can tap into the expertise of our entire legal team to address multiple legal issues that our vulnerable clients face. We also connect clients with vital social services that ensure more sustainable outcomes.

Our lawyering approach is creative and resourceful. Even when the challenges are great and the legal avenues uncertain, we won't be discouraged. We are smart, we are outraged, and we work hard. We are determined to stand up for our clients' rights—and we have the skills to do so.

Our Theory of Change

➤ **WHEN** LAE defends and advances the rights of San Francisco seniors and adults with disabilities, **THEN** these community members will be valued, housed, healthy, financially stable, and safe.



Our Values

We believe that *all people deserve equitable access to justice.*

We recognize the *structural racism and systemic inequities that are upheld by local, state, and national policies, practices, and our culture,* and that create unequal outcomes in our communities, including for older adults and people with disabilities in San Francisco.

We value:

- Respect and dignity for all seniors and people with disabilities.
- Deep listening and care for the people we serve.
- An organizational culture of belonging for all clients, staff, volunteers, and board members.

Our strategic plan centers diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout, including commitments to:

- Center diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout our organization and services.
- Prioritize equitable hiring practices and staffing that is representative of the diverse communities we serve.
- Ensure the availability of bilingual staff.
- Commit time and resources to building anti-racist and culturally responsive skills and tools to better serve our community and work together.
- Collect and evaluate data to assess community needs and address potential inequities in our service delivery.
- Deepen our work as a learning organization through conversations and staff trainings that take us closer to actualizing these principles.

Strategic Priorities and Goals



Programs: Expand program and service capacity.

Goals:

- We are able to serve all clients who come to us with housing needs.
- We are able to serve all clients who come to us with consumer or benefits needs.
- Clients receiving legal services receive the social services support they need to allow for holistic care and effective provision of legal services.
- We advance policy advocacy that prevents senior poverty, homelessness, and abuse.
- Our fully developed impact litigation program is winning cases and creating meaningful precedents.



Community: Deepen our presence in San Francisco's diverse communities.

Goals:

- LAE has a presence in all San Francisco neighborhoods where there is need and in communities representing the City's diverse ethnicities and languages.



People: Recruit, retain, and invest in exceptional staff.

Goals:

- LAE has the best compensated staff in the San Francisco legal services community.
- Our staff reflects the racial, ethnic, linguistic, gender identity, and other areas of diversity represented in the communities we serve.
- Staff members are resilient, healthy, and able to show up for our clients.
- We have a culture of caring, belonging, and bravery.



Awareness: Enhance our visibility, including with clients, partners, policy-makers, and donors.

Goals:

- LAE is a known and respected organization in the community, including by prospective clients, partners, policy-makers, and prospective donors.
- There are thriving regional and city-wide networks of legal services organizations that serve seniors.

Legal Assistance to the Elderly gratefully acknowledges the board members, staff, clients, and partners who contributed their time and insights to creating this plan.

Strategic Planning Committee

- Laura Slade Chiera, Executive Director and Managing Attorney
- Kitania Folk, Grants and Communications Coordinator
- Mischelle Mandel, Board President
- Thomas E. Drohan, Director of Litigation
- Jennifer Johnson, Board Member
- Hannah Kim, Supervising Attorney
- Elinor Roberts, Staff Attorney
- Shelby Nacino, Staff Attorney
- LaShonda Sessoms, Paralegal
- Vanessa Peña-Hallinan, Board Member
- Belinda Lyons-Newman, Consultant

Board of Directors (in addition to those on the Strategic Planning Committee)

- Donna Seid, Vice President
- Keith Rockmael, Treasurer
- Matthew Brinegar, Board Member
- Isaac Safer, Board Member
- Roger B. Levin, Board Member
- Courtney Burris, Board Member

LAE staff members (in addition to those on the Strategic Planning Committee)

- Abel Mouten, Staff Attorney
- Ana Denmark, Staff Attorney
- Barbara Lam, Staff Attorney
- Carol Bettencourt, Staff Attorney
- Chelsea Blocklin, Staff Attorney
- Darren Orr, Staff Attorney
- Jason Law, Accounting
- Jessica Juarez, Provisionally Licensed Lawyer
- Jim Faye, Paralegal
- Jose Lara Cruz, Paralegal
- Judy L. Hitchcock, Senior Staff Attorney
- Julie Lemmer, Staff Attorney
- Kelly Barnett, Staff Attorney
- Kim Kruse, Social Worker
- Lucia Childs-Walker, Staff Attorney
- Monica Castillo, Staff Attorney
- Robert Schoen, Staff Attorney
- Yue Hui (Amy) Li, Paralegal

Interview Informants

- Akiles Ceron, Program Director at Adult Protective Services (APS)
- Claire Solot, Co-Founder & Managing Director at the Bigglesworth Family Foundation
- Felisia Thibodeaux, Executive Director of the I.T. Bookman Community Center
- Hugo Ramirez, Tenant Right to Counsel (TRC) Project manager at the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD)
- Jaime Morin-Arlett, Program Operations Manager at Adult Protective Services (APS)
- James Treggiari, Executive Director of Legal Assistance for Seniors
- Jerel McCray, Managing Attorney at Bay Area Legal Aid
- Michael Zaugg, Director of Community Programs for Department of Disability and Aging Services (DAS)
- Sarah Hooper, Executive Director of the UCSF/UC Hastings Consortium on Law
- Miguel Martinez, Manager at Self-Help for the Elderly



For more information about LAE's 2022–2026 strategic plan, please contact Laura Slade Chiera, LAE Executive Director and Managing Attorney, at lchiera@laesf.org or (415) 757.4507.

Visit LAE at www.laesf.org