



CRLA

CALIFORNIA RURAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE, INC.



2025-2027

Strategic Plan Overview

Our Vision

Our vision is a just and equitable world where all communities prosper.

Our Mission

Our mission is to dismantle unjust systems through community lawyering.

Community Lawyering: using legal advocacy to help achieve solutions to community-identified issues in ways that develop local leadership and institutions that can continue to exert power to effect systemic change.

- THE SHRIVER CENTER



A LETTER FROM

Our Executive Director



Dear California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA) Supporters:

For nearly 60 years, CRLA has worked alongside communities that have historically been marginalized and exploited to fight for community-led justice. Our 2025-2027 strategic plan honors our legacy as a leading, statewide civil legal aid organization, while positioning us for an emboldened future.

CRLA will continue to be an organization where we center our clients and community in everything we do, build a healthy work culture, engage in systemic advocacy, increase our visibility to uplift the voices and experiences of our clients, and secure access to justice.

But, we will not stop at mere access. We are working toward justice that transforms individuals, communities, and systems of oppression. The four pillars in our strategic plan are designed to bring us closer to this vision — supporting CRLA's growth, sustainability, and our ability to expand our services to create more systemic change and ensure all of our clients have access to all services.

We have adopted new vision and mission statements as well as new core values to reflect the important balance between the community-led nature of our work, the compassion necessary to provide the best service possible, and our radical pursuit to dismantle unjust systems.

We are honored to have you as part of the CRLA ecosystem and our journey toward a just and equitable world where all communities prosper.

Sincerely,

Jessica Manriquez Jewell, Executive Director
California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA)



CALIFORNIA RURAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE, INC.

2025-2027 Strategic Plan

Embracing our community-led work, CRLA engaged numerous stakeholders in the process to create our three-year strategic plan. Our four plan pillars aim to amplify our local and national reputation, codify our model for community lawyering, and grow and sustain our efforts to create more opportunities to dismantle unjust systems.

Over the next 3 years, CRLA will:

Pillar 1: Grow to create systemic change, informed by the needs of the community

While our direct service work makes a significant incremental impact, our systemic advocacy and community lawyering efforts play a transformative role in dismantling unjust systems to positively impact entire communities. Both are equally necessary to meet our mission. Our work under Pillar One ensures we can focus on providing clients with the services they need, while also allowing us to hear, learn from, and work alongside the communities we serve to uncover more opportunities to advocate for and impact systemic change. When we achieve Pillar One, we will have implemented a phased organizational growth plan that allows us to reach more people in more communities as well as grow our systemic impact.

Pillar 2: Ensure all clients have access to all services regardless of location

Under Pillar Two, we will continue to operate as a statewide organization, leaning into our community-led work, while creating a streamlined organizational structure that allows for manageable workloads and clear expectations for our team. This will include rebranding our field offices to Rural Justice Centers, focusing on delivering services and building trust with populations that share a common identity, and establishing practice areas. We will continue to operate strategic initiatives that support innovation and incubation of projects responsive to the community.

Pillar 3: Develop our people to achieve our mission

The communities we serve, our staff, and board members are the heartbeat of CRLA's mission. Pillar Three is dedicated to maintaining a healthy culture, reducing turnover, increasing collaboration across Rural Justice Centers and programs, and boosting engagement of our staff and board.

Pillar 4: Create the infrastructure for growth and more impact

Pillar Four is about ensuring we have the infrastructure necessary to continue to grow and operate as a statewide organization. We will launch a capital campaign, which will allow us to solidify or establish a permanent presence in the communities we serve. We will update, upgrade, and align our technology systems to support data gathering, outcomes measurement, and advocacy efforts, and update our processes and systems to create quality experiences for everyone who engages with CRLA – from clients to donors to staff and community members.



CALIFORNIA RURAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE, INC.

exists to fight for community-led justice.

CRLA has a nearly 60-year track record of working together with residents and communities to transform the legal landscape in California. Our team is made up of people, many of whom are from the communities we serve, who are passionate about advancing justice. With input from our client communities, we use legal advocacy, education, and support for community leadership to amplify the voices of those underrepresented in existing power structures and move our society toward equity and justice.

OUR CORE VALUES

Radical

We creatively and courageously challenge the status quo to transform things once viewed as radical into the expectation.

Compassionate

We foster a mutually supportive, caring environment for our clients, colleagues, and ourselves, so together, we can make a positive impact.



Community-led

We listen to, respect, and partner with our neighbors to shape our work, amplify their voices, and unlock our community power.

Committed to Justice

We advance justice and honor dignity by fighting for fairness, empowerment, and meaningful systemic change alongside our clients, colleagues, and community members.



CRLA

www.crla.org