

**LCR**

**LAWYERS FOR  
CIVIL RIGHTS  
BOSTON**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

2021 — 2024

**Lawyers for Civil Rights**

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# **Organizational** **History and Profile**

Founded in 1968, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights (as it was formerly known) was the first of eight local affiliates of the Washington-based Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a national organization formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to involve the private bar in providing legal representation to address racial discrimination. In 1973, the Lawyers' Committee became the first pro bono project of the Boston Bar Association (BBA) and was the only Lawyers' Committee in the country affiliated with a major bar association. Although the organization is now separately incorporated with its own 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, it continues to maintain strong ties to the BBA and private bar. During its 50th anniversary in 2018, the organization rebranded and became **Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR)**.

Membership by private law firms constitutes the working foundation of LCR. Member law firms fund a significant part of LCR's annual operating expenses and provide millions of dollars in pro bono legal services by co-counseling with the organization. In this manner, for more than fifty years, LCR has harnessed the resources and legal talent of Boston's leading law firms to secure the civil rights of people of color and immigrants.

During the last five years, LCR has grown in size, impact, and presence, developing a reputation as a leading champion in fighting discrimination on behalf of people of color and immigrants. LCR is known for its creative and courageous litigation, education, and advocacy in collaboration with law firms and community partners, and for its effectiveness both in impact litigation and legal actions on behalf of individuals. In addition, LCR | BizGrow, the organization's small business and community economic development project, has also experienced a significant increase in activity and service to the community.

Today, the organization works with more than forty pro bono law firms and partners with dozens of community-based groups to advance justice and equality.

# **Strategic Planning**

## **Process and Committee**

### **Membership**

Building on the successful implementation of the previous strategic plan (2018-2021), Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR) was interested in responding to the new environment — the transition to a new federal administration, changes in leadership in the City of Boston, and the challenges of concurrent and overlapping public health, economic, and racial justice pandemics—to identify the organization’s strategic priorities for the next three years.

During the Fall of 2020, a survey was sent to Board members, member firms, staff and a wide range of external stakeholders, including clients, community partners, bar associations and funders. The collected data was used to shape the SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges) report and to identify LCR’s strategic priority areas. In addition, the consultant conducted eight (8) interviews with members of community and legal organizations in Rhode Island and Western Massachusetts for a separate report to assess the feasibility of LCR’s geographic expansion. The Strategic Planning Committee was officially launched on January 12, 2021. The entire Strategic Planning Committee held eight (8) two-hour meetings with additional work and convenings from January to May 2021. The plan was presented to the Board on May 27, 2021. The Board approved it on September 22, 2021.

Due to COVID-19, all meetings were held virtually. The Strategic Planning Committee had robust Board and staff representation. Even with the challenges of pandemic life, the committee exhibited perfect attendance to meetings with high level of energy, engagement and creativity. The committee completed additional work in between meetings. The product is a carefully thought-out Strategic Plan that provides clear guidance for the next three years.

## **Strategic Planning Committee Members**

**Lisa Pirozzolo** Board Co-Chair

**Inez Friedman-Boyce** Board Co-Chair

**Jenny Rikoski** Board Member

**Colin Van Dyke** Board Member

**Monica Shah** Board Member

**Iván Espinoza-Madrigal** Executive Director

**Oren Sellstrom** Litigation Director

**Sophia Hall** Deputy Litigation Director

**Priya Lane** LCR | BizGrow Director

**Claudia Lach** Consultant

# **Executive** **Summary**

The emphasis of LCR's last Strategic Plan was on high-impact work, collaborations with law firms, financial sustainability, and Board engagement and diversity. This new Strategic Plan builds on LCR's successful development in all these areas during the past three years.

Although the organization's Mission, Vision, and Core Values were articulated in the previous plan, this process provided an opportunity for revision and discussion taking into consideration the current context of civil rights work. The spirit and essence of the Mission, Vision, and Core Values remain the same, but they have been updated to emphasize LCR's commitment to anti-racism and the continued pursuit of cutting-edge litigation, legal advocacy, and small business work. The new Strategic Plan also focuses on the expansion of legal and programmatic work across key civil rights fronts, including Fair Housing, Education, and Voting Rights. It also focuses on expanding LCR | BizGrow to provide legal and technical support to small businesses in Central and Western Massachusetts.

# **Mission and Vision**

## **Vision**

A world free of racism, with justice, dignity, and lived equality for all.

## **Mission**

Lawyers for Civil Rights works with communities of color and immigrants to fight discrimination and foster equity through creative and courageous legal advocacy, education, and economic empowerment. In partnership with law firms and community allies, we provide free, life-changing legal support to individuals, families, and small businesses.

# **Core Values**

## **Bold and Creative Use of the Law to Fight Systemic Racism**

As an anti-racism organization, we are committed to being at the forefront of the civil rights movement. We value creativity and expertise in the use of our legal system to achieve groundbreaking social justice and equality.

## **The Power of Public Engagement**

We value public engagement as a means to amplify the voices of the communities we serve.

## **Collaboration and Partnerships**

We believe in building bridges between diverse constituencies, forging strong partnerships with a broad range of community allies and law firms, and exercising leadership in areas where we have unique expertise.

## **Courage, Commitment, and Action**

We value the courage and commitment shown by our staff, partners, and clients to act boldly, often against established interests, as part of our shared mission to foster equality and fight discrimination.

## **Respect for Clients and Communities**

We are committed to community-driven lawyering that respects the priorities, dignity and self-determination of our clients and their communities. We provide culturally-relevant and linguistically-competent legal services and programs.

## **Diversity**

We believe the civil rights movement and our organization must be diverse in every respect. We value the insight and credibility that diverse perspectives bring to the long-term struggle for social change.

# This Strategic Plan focuses on four areas:

## **1** LCR's Distinct Approach

- Leverage our relationships and long history of rapid-response, cutting-edge and timely litigation and advocacy from a community-based perspective to help us identify problems and craft solutions to fight systemic racism, all while attracting new partners and resources.

## **2** Services and Programs

- Commit to invest in all of LCR's nine practice areas (Fair Housing, Employment, Police Accountability, Health Justice, Race and Climate Justice, Education, Immigrant Rights, Voting Rights, and BizGrow), with an emphasis on strengthening and expanding our work in Education, Housing and Voting Rights.
- BizGrow, currently a very successful program, presents opportunities for expansion, especially geographically.

### **3 Organizational Structure and Human resources**

- Grow the number of attorneys (focusing on BizGrow, Housing and Education), and increase non-legal staff positions to support LCR’s mission.
- Given significant expansion of the LCR staff in recent years, revise the organizational structure to support and serve all the practice areas while maintaining the organizational culture that makes LCR so effective.
- Design an operations protocol for the post-COVID work environment in the first months of Strategic Plan implementation.

### **4 Resources**

- Expand sources of financial revenue beyond the core contributions from law firms and Board members.
- Provide a vehicle for corporate sponsors and individual donors, including collaborating attorneys, to support racial and economic justice.
- Increase involvement of Board members in fundraising efforts.

**Strategic Issues,**  
**Core Strategies,**  
**Goals and Objectives**

# 1.

## LCR'S Distinct Approach

Leverage our relationships and long history of rapid-response, cutting-edge and timely litigation and advocacy from a community-based perspective to help us identify problems (whatever the source); communicate issues to move decision-makers; and craft solutions to fight systemic racism, all while attracting new partners and resources.

### Deepen and expand the docket to ensure it is timely and responsive to the current environment.

- Assess docket to identify opportunities for growth (e.g., policing work), and to address areas that have been left out.
- Evaluate docket to identify areas that LCR can wind down.
- Strategically consider opportunities for affirmative (to create a new policy or program) versus defensive litigation (to preserve a policy or program).
- Strategically consider the proportion of direct service work versus impact litigation.
- Assess the vehicles and tools we are using for litigation and advocacy (filing complaints in court versus administrative agencies).

### Build strategic and key relationships that foster our docket and programmatic work.

- Integrate the LCR | HealthJustice (formerly the Medical-Legal Partnership) into the organization's systemic litigation work streams.
- Inventory existing and potential new relationships with community partners and allies to ensure alignment and strategic coordination of ongoing and potential work.
- Strengthen relationship-building with key federal, state and local officials.
- Build deliberate and intentional relationships with law firms, in-house counsel, and other key legal players.

# 2.

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## Services and Programs

Commit to invest in all of LCR's nine practice areas (Fair Housing, Employment, Police Accountability, Health Justice, Race and Climate Justice, Education, Immigrant Rights, Voting Rights and BizGrow), with an emphasis on strengthening and expanding the areas of Education, Housing and Voting Rights. BizGrow, currently a very successful program, presents opportunities for expansion, especially geographically.

**During the strategic planning process, LCR reaffirmed the full scope of its current services and programs:**

- Impact litigation
- Direct legal service
- Legal consultations (intakes/referrals)
- Small businesses: legal clinics, office hours, workshops/trainings, individual representations, and the annual BizGrow Conference
- Legal clinics with Mass General Brigham
- Policy advocacy
- Advising federal, state and local policy makers
- Drafting policy proposals
- Community outreach, education, engagement, and empowerment

### **Champion Education and Housing justice for people of color and immigrants across Massachusetts.**

- Connect with community partners and allies to identify legal opportunities and new key partners.
- Identify areas of Education and Housing where LCR can make unique and important contributions.
- Evaluate the Education and Housing portfolios to promote the growth and expansion of these work streams.
- Hire dedicated long-term staff for these areas.
- Identify criteria for case selection and development.
- Dismantle legal barriers and identify opportunities for development of jurisprudence in Massachusetts in these areas.

### **Secure greater economic justice for more people of color, immigrants, and women.**

- Identify and evaluate new opportunities to promote the growth and expansion of BizGrow.
- Assess programmatic vehicles (office hours, clinics, workshops, trainings, and 1:1 legal consultations) and explore new legal options (transactional and litigation).
- Explore industry-specific work (green economy, tech, food, arts/culture, etc.)
- Create plan to guide BizGrow's growth, including staffing, resource use, relationship-building, and client impact.

### **Work collaboratively with the private bar in overlapping issue areas by contributing LCR's unique expertise and voice to fill gaps and meet community needs.**

- Identify gaps in legal services and community needs, particularly in issue areas such as employment discrimination and police accountability.
- Identify LCR practice areas where there is private bar involvement, and determine scope of overlap, if any.
- Articulate a clear message and consistently communicate LCR's unique value-added proposition.
- Develop deeper relationships and new partnerships with private attorneys to generate cases aligned with LCR's mission and strategic plan.

### **Deliberately and intentionally expand LCR's work, particularly focusing on BizGrow and voting rights, to Central and Western Massachusetts.**

- Organize a steady stream of BizGrow events in Central and Western Massachusetts.
- Replicate LCR's community- and litigation-based success in Lowell.
- Develop high profile litigation to showcase LCR's expertise and capacity in Greater Worcester and Greater Springfield.
- Deepen and expand partnerships with community-based groups in Central and Western Massachusetts.
- Raise LCR's profile as the "go to" organization for civil rights issues through targeted communications, strategic relationship-building, and by organizing community-based events and activities such as legal clinics.
- Strengthen ties with the local bar, including bar associations, outside of Greater Boston.

# 3.

## Organizational Structure and Human Resources

Grow the number of attorneys focused on BizGrow, Housing and Education, and increase non-legal positions to support LCR's mission. Considering LCR's recent growth — from six attorneys, one fellow, and one paralegal to nine attorneys, four fellows, and two paralegals — revise the organizational structure to support and serve all the practice areas, including plans for work expansion, while maintaining the organizational culture that makes LCR highly effective. This Strategic Plan stresses the need to design an operations protocol for the post-COVID work environment. This is a high priority to be accomplished in the first months of Strategic Plan implementation.

### **Increase the number of staff attorneys and fellows to expand the legal work, particularly focusing on BizGrow, Housing and Education.**

- Mark BizGrow's 20th anniversary in 2021 by creating and launching the "BizGrow Fellowship."
- Maximize opportunities for law firm and corporate sponsorship.
- Survey organizational needs, particularly focusing on Education and Housing, to determine whether hiring a fellow or more experienced attorney would be appropriate, and devise a plan for staff hiring and growth.
- For fellowship candidates, consider those bringing more professional experience to recreate the successful model followed by recent fellows.
- Hire additional staff following plan devised.

### **Increase the number of non-legal staff to support legal staff and LCR's mission.**

- Assess the need for non-legal staff as the legal team grows.
- Formalize non-legal professional positions (i.e., grant writing, development, communications). Develop a plan to better achieve administrative tasks.
- Hire additional non-legal staff to fill needs identified by assessment process.

### **Develop a new organizational structure that organizes staff in relation to current and expected functions, including supervisory needs.**

- Management will dedicate the 2021 staff retreat to exploring the design of an organizational chart and structure.
- Assess the work of interns, paralegals and fellows, including them in the organizational chart with clear lines of communication and supervision.
- Assess support needs to maximize staff development, effectiveness, productivity and morale.
- New structure will outline clear lines of communication and nature of supervision, including meetings.

### **Plan and implement a new post-COVID office reality and environment, while actively fostering a sense of cohesion.**

- Solicit staff feedback on post-COVID office protocols and expectations.
- Solicit Board, law firm, and stakeholder feedback on office protocols.
- Consider adopting post-COVID budget to cover work-from-home expenses, including technology expenses.
- Create flexibility and adaptability as post-COVID work plan is created and implemented.

# 4.

## Resources

Expand sources of financial revenue beyond the core contributions from law firms and Board members to implement this Strategic Plan, particularly to deepen and broaden LCR's work and to support geographic expansion. Provide a vehicle for corporate sponsors and individual donors, including collaborating attorneys, to support racial and economic justice. Increase involvement of Board members on fundraising efforts.

### **Increase contributions by identifying and cultivating new donors beyond core law firms and Board members.**

- Identify new corporate partners, collaborating lawyers, and law firm prospects and cultivate relations for annual giving.
- Invite corporate partners and law firms to sponsor dedicated initiatives and/or endow attorney fellowships.
- Establish relationships with law firms and collaborating lawyers outside of Boston, focusing on Worcester and Springfield.
- Identify allies in the Boston offices of national firms to leverage those relationships into financial and pro bono support.

### **Increase Board member involvement in fundraising efforts.**

- Create more opportunities for Board members and Board committees to help expand LCR's base of supporters, including donors.
- Establish a Strategic Partnerships Committee of the Board focused on relationship-building and networking to identify and cultivate prospects.

# LCR CASE HISTORY

## 2021

### **20 Years of BizGrow**

BizGrow celebrates 20 years of building wealth in low-income communities, serving over 1000 small businesses a year.

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### **Vaccine Equity & Justice**

Collaborating with medical providers and community organizations to address racial disparities in COVID-19 vaccine access.

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### **BECMA v. City of Boston**

Title VI Complaint filed with DOJ to address racial disparities in Boston's public contracts on behalf of BECMA, Amplify Latinx, and the Greater Boston Latino Network.

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### **Boston Parents Coalition v. BPS**

Successful intervention with NAACP Boston Branch, Greater Boston Latino Network, Asian American Resource Workshop, and Asian-Pacific Islander Civic Action Network in lawsuit concerning the admissions policy for Boston's exam schools.

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### **Greenroots v. EPA**

Lawsuit filed with Greenroots and Conservation Law Foundation challenging EPA's interpretation of Title VI.

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### **Pandemic Relief for Tenants and Workers**

In response to housing instability, launched a pro bono initiative to connect hundreds of families with emergency rental assistance (RAFT) and unemployment benefits.

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### **Worcester Interfaith v. City of Worcester**

Federal Voting Rights Act lawsuit filed on behalf of Black and Latinx voters in Worcester, challenging an all "at large" method of electing school committee members as illegally diluting the vote of communities of color.

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## **Redistricting**

Launched Democratizing Redistricting to ensure that the redistricting process is fair, equitable, transparent, and community driven. Coordinated efforts with the Drawing Democracy Coalition.

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## 2020

### **Pandemic Relief for Small Businesses**

Co-led the creation of the Covid Relief Coalition, the Coalition for an Equitable Economy, and Small Business Strong to provide free legal assistance to hundreds of struggling small businesses during the pandemic.

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### **George Floyd**

In response to George Floyd's murder, filed complaints on behalf of Black men and women racially profiled by local and state police.

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### **Cofield v. McDonald**

Taxpayer lawsuit challenging entanglement and 287(g) contracts between local sheriffs and immigration officials.

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### **Juarez v. SoFi**

Class action challenging discriminatory policy of denying DACA recipients access to loans.

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### **Savino v. Souza**

First-of-its-kind class action filed on behalf of immigration detainees held in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions at the Bristol County House of Correction during COVID-19 pandemic. Within a year of filing, the facility population dropped from a capacity of over 200 individuals to less than 10. Lawsuit served as a blueprint for COVID-19 litigation across the country.

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### **Bertin v. Galvin**

Filed a landmark emergency SJC petition on behalf of Black, Latinx, and Asian-American voters, as well as Common Cause and MassVOTE, to compel the Commonwealth to send applications for mail-in ballots to all registered voters, as specified in an emergency elections law passed at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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### **Commonwealth v. Long**

Amicus resulting in major state criminal law reform providing victims of racial profiling with opportunities to challenge the legality of racebased traffic stops.

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### **Morgan v. Boston Police Department**

Successful case on behalf of a Black man improperly bypassed by BPD. Client is now in the police academy.

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### **Suffolk Downs**

Successful Title VI complaint on behalf of GreenRoots and City Life/ Vida Urbana with HUD alleging national origin discrimination in zoning and planning processes in Boston. The complaint resulted in a landmark agreement between the City and HUD promoting language access and community engagement in future planning and development.

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### **Cruz v. C&W Facilities Services**

Successful race and religion discrimination case on behalf of an immigrant janitorial worker at Logan Airport.

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### **NSTAR Title VI Complaint**

Filed Title VI complaint on behalf of GreenRoots with Conservation Law Foundation regarding the state's refusal to provide meaningful language access. EPA launched a probe of the MA Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to assess their compliance with federal civil rights law.

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### **Henry v. Needham**

Represented Black father of four, who was handcuffed in broad daylight on a main street because police falsely believed he was a shoplifter. Town of Needham launched an internal affairs investigation and hired an independent investigator.

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### **Haitian-Americans United v. Trump**

Lawsuit filed on behalf of Haitian-Americans United, Centro Presente, the Chelsea Collaborative, and the Brazilian Worker Center challenging President Trump's exclusion of undocumented residents from the congressional apportionment base following Census 2020. The memorandum was rescinded by President Biden in January 2021.

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### **New York v. Trump**

Supreme Court amicus brief in support of enjoining President Trump's memorandum excluding undocumented people from the congressional apportionment base following Census 2020. The memorandum was rescinded by President Biden in January 2021.

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### **Martin v. Rollins**

Amicus brief on the importance of filming police officers. This right was upheld by the First Circuit.

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### **Hernandez v. Strega**

Favorable settlement on behalf of Latina who was sexually harassed while working in upscale restaurant.

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### **Health Disparities**

Expanded Medical-Legal Partnership to MGH health centers in Chelsea, Everett, Revere and Charlestown.

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### **MFHC v. HUD**

Secured nationwide injunction against HUD preserving disparate impact protections of the Fair Housing Act on behalf of the MA Fair Housing Center and Housing Works.

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# LCR CASE HISTORY

## **Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard**

Represented multi-racial group of students in landmark trial to support Harvard's use of race-conscious admissions. Federal court ruled in our favor, upholding Harvard's admissions process, and the ruling was affirmed by the First Circuit.

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**2019**

## **LCR | BizGrow**

Rebranded our Economic Justice Project as LCR | BizGrow

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## **Baker v. MA Trial Court**

MCAD complaint filed on behalf of a Black female court officer who was improperly disciplined at work after reporting a colleague for calling her the N-word.

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## **Mussotte v. Peyser**

In response to major lawsuit brought on behalf of low-income students and students of color challenging discriminatory and unequal Massachusetts school funding formula, state enacted landmark Student Opportunity Act providing the largest investment in public education in decades. The Act resulted in millions of dollars flowing to low-income school districts.

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## **Washington v. DHS**

Amicus brief filed on behalf of healthcare providers across the country challenging the Trump Administration's "public charge" rule. Favorable decision extensively cited the amicus. The Biden Administration subsequently announced that it will not enforce the "public charge" rule.

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## **Huot v. City of Lowell**

Successfully settled landmark federal voting rights lawsuit filed on behalf of Asian-American and Latinx residents of Lowell, which charged that city's at-large electoral system illegally diluted the votes of

people of color. Settlement requires city to change to a more fair and equitable system, accompanied by a robust public education campaign in English, Spanish and Khmer, allowing all residents to participate in selecting the new electoral system.

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## **Gregory v. Commonwealth**

Class action complaint challenging overly-stringent background regulations by the MA Department of Early Education and Care, which impose a lifetime ban on childcare work for juvenile offenses, many decades-old, and have a disparate impact on employees of color.

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## **IIC v. Cuccinelli**

Lawsuit filed to stop the rescission of medical deferred action program which allows immigrants being treated for life-threatening conditions to be protected from removal. Administration backed down and reversed the rescission after lawsuit filed.

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## **Centro Presente v. McAleenan**

Federal litigation filed in Washington, DC., to stop the Trump Administration's dramatic expansion of "expedited removal," which eliminates due process for immigrants facing deportation.

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## **Ryan v. ICE**

Groundbreaking federal lawsuit filed on behalf of prosecutors, public defenders, and community groups, including the Chelsea Collaborative, to block civil immigration arrests in and around Massachusetts courthouses. Lawsuit served as a blueprint for similar cases nationally.

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## **African Communities Together v. Trump**

Case on behalf of Liberian nationals who are the beneficiaries of Deferred Enforced Departure (DED), a humanitarian program which the Trump Administration sought to terminate in violation of Equal Protection. Hours before our preliminary

injunction motion was set to be heard in federal court, the Trump Administration backed down and extended the program.

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### **Figueroa v. Boston Police Dep't**

Race discrimination case filed by civilian women of color against BPD, identifying a pattern and practice of failing to promote candidates of color and a discriminatory distribution of overtime hours.

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### **Commonwealth v. Espinal**

Amicus brief filed in the Supreme Judicial Court successfully arguing that jurors should be asked about bias against non-English speakers during voir dire.

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### **Dep't of Commerce v. New York**

Amicus brief filed in U.S. Supreme Court arguing against inclusion of a citizenship question on the 2020 Census. Brief focused on the importance of the Administrative Procedure Act to communities of color and low-income communities as a check on illegal agency action.

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### **Census Advocacy**

Launched multi-pronged campaign to ensure a full and accurate Census count, including a multilingual Census Hotline.

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### **Amazon Class Action**

Nationwide class action filed on behalf of Black and Latinx former Amazon drivers who were suddenly terminated based on an overly stringent background check policy, which included old and minor offenses, and disproportionately affected people of color.

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## **2018**

### **50th Anniversary & Name Change to Lawyers for Civil Rights**

Celebrated our 50th anniversary and rebranded as Lawyers for Civil Rights. The U.S. Congress

marked this landmark occasion with a Congressional Resolution honoring our 50 years of impactful work. The Boston City Council issued a resolution honoring Lawyers for Civil Rights and declaring October 18 as Civil Rights and Economic Justice Day in Boston. At our 50th Anniversary Gala, Anita Hill called for national and legal solutions to sexual harassment and violence.

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### **Finley v. Lexington**

Successfully settled a discrimination lawsuit on behalf of a Black female METCO social worker who was unlawfully terminated after advocating for the students of color in the school district.

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### **Centro Presente v. Trump**

First lawsuit filed in the country to save Temporary Protected Status (TPS), humanitarian protection for Salvadoran, Honduran and Haitian immigrants. Affected individuals and community groups allege that TPS termination was racially motivated and discriminatory.

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### **Coleman v. City of Boston**

In response to #BlackLivesMatter, lawsuit filed on behalf of a mother whose son—an unarmed Black young man with a disability—was fatally shot by the Boston Police Department.

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### **K.O. v. Sessions**

Emergency petitions filed in response to family separation crisis to secure the release and reunification of children torn apart from their families at the border. Filed the first national class action seeking damages on behalf of separated children. Suit seeks creation of designated fund to address the mental health consequences of separation.

# LCR CASE HISTORY

## **Pilot v. Brookline**

Successfully settled discrimination lawsuit filed by two Black police officers in the Brookline Police Department.

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## **Rivas v. Bristol County Sheriff**

Damages action against the Bristol County Sheriff filed on behalf of immigrant father who was unlawful detained and denied bail based solely on his immigration status.

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## **Sexual Harassment Settlement**

Successfully settled sexual harassment charge at MCAD brought by Latina immigrant against wholesale food preparation company in Everett.

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## **Finklea v. City of Boston**

Secured favorable Suffolk Superior Court decision addressing the practice of police departments using overly stringent background checks to bar qualified minority candidates from employment opportunities.

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## **2017**

### **Romero et al. v. McCormick & Schmick's**

In response to #MeToo, filed sexual harassment lawsuit on behalf of five low-wage Latina workers against a national restaurant chain, alleging a hostile work environment filled with lewd behavior and unwanted touching.

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### **City of Chelsea v. Trump**

Federal lawsuit filed on behalf of Chelsea and Lawrence, challenging the constitutionality of President Trump's Executive Order targeting sanctuary cities. The suit helped to preserve federal funding and to protect local control over law enforcement priorities.

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### **BizGrow Conference**

Launched signature event, connecting more than 200 entrepreneurs with free legal and business support.

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## **Cook v. Mystic Valley Regional Charter School**

Represented Black students in successful challenge to school's discriminatory hair policy, which banned hair extensions and other hairstyles worn disproportionately by students of color.

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## **Lawyers' Committee v. Hodgson**

Successful lawsuit to compel disclosure of records related to Bristol County sheriff's enforcement of federal immigration law. Within hours of filing the complaint, the sheriff apologized and released records.

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## **Lawyers' Committee v. Spence**

Public records lawsuit filed with the SJC to compel the Massachusetts Trial Court to release information on its employment practices.

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## **2016**

### **Boston Latin School Complaint**

Federal civil rights complaint requesting that the U.S. Attorney investigate racial harassment at Boston Latin School. U.S. Attorney found that BLS violated federal law by failing to adequately respond to racial harassment, and the City of Boston agreed to take steps to improve the racial climate at BLS.

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### **Fisher v. Univ. of Texas at Austin**

Amicus brief filed on behalf of prominent national empirical scholars in a case concerning the use of a race-based admissions policy at the Univ. of Texas at Austin, arguing that the "mismatch" theory espoused by affirmative action opponents is flawed. The Court upheld the policy, affirming use of race as one of many factors in college admissions.

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### **Lawyers' Committee v. Evans**

Successful lawsuit to compel the Boston Police to release records concerning the racial impact of its employment practices. At a time of growing tension

between police and communities of color, the data was the subject of intense public scrutiny concerning the lack of diversity in the police force.

### **Airbnb**

Urged HUD to investigate Airbnb's compliance with civil rights laws, citing research showing that Airbnb renters with distinctively Black names are 16% less likely to be accepted by hosts than other renters. In response, Airbnb took immediate steps to eliminate discrimination by hosts against minority renters.

### **School Discipline Toolkit**

Released toolkit to educate teachers, administrators, students and parents about school disciplinary policies and alternatives to suspensions, in order to improve school discipline and combat race and disability related disparities in suspension rates.

### **Doe v. Peyser**

Intervention filed on behalf of students of color, students with disabilities, and English language learners in support of retaining Massachusetts' charter school cap. The SJC upheld the constitutionality of the charter cap, preserving vital resources for traditional public schools.

### **2015**

#### **Defay v. Boston Police**

MCAD found that Boston Police discriminated against Black recruits in its Training Academy. MCAD ordered Boston Police to "cease and desist" from discriminatory conduct and to reinstate and compensate affected individual.

### **2014**

#### **Not Measuring Up – School Discipline Report**

Published groundbreaking report analyzing Massachusetts school discipline data and finding that students of color, students with disabilities, and char-

ter school students are disproportionately suspended, particularly for minor misbehavior, bringing national attention to disparities in school discipline rates.

### **City of Brockton v. Energy Facilities**

#### **Siting Board**

Filed an environmental justice amicus brief challenging decision to locate a power plant in a minority community.

### **2013**

#### **Pulido v. National Grid**

Successfully represented Filipino electrical worker in employment discrimination matter against National Grid.

### **2012**

#### **NAACP v. Galvin**

Challenge to the Commonwealth's failure to offer voter registration opportunities to public assistance recipients, in violation of the National Voter Registration Act. Commonwealth agreed to policy changes and ongoing monitoring, enfranchising thousands of low-income individuals.

### **Ortiz v. Boston Children's Hospital**

Employment discrimination case challenging wrongful termination of Latina health care workers. Case resulted in favorable settlement, including a bilingual public apology.

### **2010**

#### **Bonds v. Boston School Committee**

Successful employment discrimination case on behalf of a Black teacher at Boston Latin School who received less desirable teaching assignments than less-qualified White teachers.

### **EEOC v. Autozone**

Successfully represented a Sikh employee, who faced religious discrimination.

# LCR CASE HISTORY

**2008**

## **Amara v. Fairmont Copley Plaza**

Successfully represented seven Moroccan and Muslim employees of the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel who faced religious and national origin discrimination.

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**2006**

## **Bradley v. City of Lynn**

Intervened on behalf of the NAACP and the Boston Society of Vulcans to challenge discriminatory civil service exams for police and firefighter jobs in twenty communities. In a settlement, the state agreed to offer back pay and jobs to 66 minority candidates who took the discriminatory exams.

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## **EEOC v. Home Depot**

Successfully represented a Black employee who experienced a racially hostile work environment and was wrongfully terminated.

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**2005**

## **Arise for Social Justice v. City of Springfield**

Successfully challenged Springfield's "at-large" election system, which diluted minority voting power in violation of the Voting Rights Act.

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**2004**

## **Alshrafi v. American Airlines**

Federal court ruled that the Airline Deregulation Act did not preempt a discrimination claim by an Arab-American passenger who was barred from a flight after 9/11.

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## **Black Political Task Force v. Galvin**

Federal court struck down the 2001 State House redistricting plan for 17 districts serving Boston, and enjoined the Commonwealth from holding elections for those seats until the court approved a new plan. Court found that the state plan violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, resulted in "extreme" packing

of the 6th Suffolk district, and improperly stripped minority voters out of the 11th and 12th Suffolk districts.

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**2003**

## **Grutter Amicus Brief**

Co-authored amicus brief filed by the Boston Bar Ass'n. and leading Boston law firms in the U.S. Supreme Court in support of affirmative action in admissions to the Univ. of Michigan Law School.

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## **Comfort v. Lynn School Committee**

Filed amicus brief, along with the NAACP, successfully defending Lynn's voluntary school desegregation plan against a constitutional attack.

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## **Jones v. City of Boston**

Landmark legal challenge to a discriminatory and unreliable hair test used by the City of Boston to determine drug use. In 2014, the First Circuit ruled that the hair test disproportionately affects Black officers. In a companion case, the MA Civil Service Commission found in 2013 that the hair test is scientifically unreliable and required Boston Police to reinstate six officers.

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## **Health Disparities Project**

Established Health Disparities Project centered on Medical-Legal Partnership with Massachusetts General Hospital in Chelsea.

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**2002**

## **South Boston Betterment Trust Corporation v. Boston Redevelopment Authority**

Filed amicus brief to ensure that community benefits derived from Seaport District development were equitably distributed to minority neighborhoods.

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## **Mayor of Cambridge v. Secretary of the Commonwealth**

Filed amicus brief with the SJC to protect several majority African American State House districts.

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**2001**

**Established Economic Justice Project**

In its first year, the project provided free legal support to over 250 small businesses and entrepreneurs.

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**Morris v. City of Lawrence**

Federal court enjoined the City of Lawrence from implementing a voter ID policy that would have discouraged Latinos from voting.

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**2000**

**Mendes v. Sullivan**

Successfully represented a Cape Verdean couple who were assaulted and had their property vandalized by White neighbors.

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**1999**

**Jane Doe v. Boston Housing Authority**

Class action lawsuit against the Boston Housing Authority for failing to protect minority tenants from chronic, racially-motivated violence and harassment at historically White housing developments. Case resulted in HUD’s first-ever finding of “systemic discrimination,” and the Housing Authority agreed to a \$1.5 million settlement, including adoption of a “zero-tolerance policy” for racial harassment.

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**1998**

Lawyers’ Committee participated in the formation of the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston.

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**Thornton v. Amtrak**

Employment discrimination class action lawsuit on behalf of minority track workers resulting in a \$16 million settlement and systemic changes in hiring, training, promotion, and discipline.

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**1997**

**Julks v. Neptune Towers**

Successful lawsuit against federally-subsidized housing development that maintained a pattern and practice of discrimination.

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**1996**

**Barrett v. Danca Realty World**

Housing discrimination case at the MCAD resulted in a \$60,000 award for emotional distress, the largest amount ever awarded at that time.

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**Mak v. Fall River Housing Authority**

Successfully represented Cambodian tenants against the Fall River Housing Authority, which failed to protect them from racial violence and harassment.

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**1993**

**McDuffy v. Secretary of the Executive Office of Education**

SJC struck down Massachusetts’ public school financing system, which relied heavily on local property taxes and resulted in gross disparities between districts. SJC ruled that Massachusetts has a duty under the state constitution to provide an adequate education for all children, regardless of the wealth of their local communities.

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**Bennett v. City of Boston**

Federal lawsuit on behalf of families challenging unlawful searches and seizures by police during the Carol Stuart murder investigation.

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**1992**

**Culbreath v. BayBanks**

BayBanks agreed to an \$11 million settlement in a lawsuit over its indirect home improvement financing program, which used illegal sales tactics to lure homeowners in communities of color to take out high interest loans, in violation of consumer protection and civil rights laws.

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# LCR CASE HISTORY

**1988**

At the Lawyers' Committee's 20th Anniversary, Sen. Edward Kennedy called for "a new abolitionist movement" to stamp out racism.

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**Black Political Task Force v. Connelly**

Federal court invalidated the State House redistricting plan based on the 1985 state census for violating the "one person, one vote" principle. First Latino state legislator elected from newly created Boston district.

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**NAACP v. Boston Housing Authority**

Federal class action lawsuit against the Boston Housing Authority for maintaining racially segregated public housing.

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**1987**

**Thong Lim v. Somerville Housing Authority**

Federal class action lawsuit against the Somerville Housing Authority for its failure to protect minority tenants from racial violence and harassment.

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**Hispanic Parents Advisory Council v. City of Lowell**

School desegregation and bilingual education case in Lowell, resulting in a favorable settlement.

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**1986**

**Established Fair Housing Project**

**1983**

**Latino Political Action Committee v. City of Boston**

Federal court invalidated Boston's redistricting plan for violating the constitutional principle of "one person, one vote," under section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

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**1982**

**Established Project to Combat Racial Violence**

**1981**

**Rendell-Baker v. Kohn**

Represented several teachers at a private special education school in Brookline.

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**Hispanic Parents Advisory Council v. City of Holyoke**

School desegregation case in Holyoke, resulting in a favorable settlement including bilingual and special education plans.

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**1979**

**Brown v. City of Salem**

Successfully represented minority applicant who was not hired as a police officer despite ranking first on the civil service exam.

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**1978**

**Latino Association for Progress & Action v. Worcester Public Schools**

Lawsuit to compel the Worcester Public Schools to provide equal educational opportunities to children with limited English proficiency. Settled by a consent decree.

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**Latinos Unidos de Chelsea en Acción v. HUD**

Challenged the disbursement of federal funds to the City of Chelsea under the 1974 Housing and Community Development Act.

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**NAACP v. HUD**

Class action lawsuit challenging the discriminatory use of HUD funds disbursed to Boston, resulting in a favorable settlement.

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**MAMLEO v. Boston Police**

Challenged a discriminatory civil service exam for promotions to sergeant, resulting in a consent decree that led to the first permanent Boston Police

sergeants of color. The consent decree survived a challenge as “reverse discrimination” in *MAMLEO v. Boston Police*. A court upheld the consent decree’s extension to lieutenants and captains in *Stuart v. Roache*.

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### **Castro & NAACP v. Beecher**

Successfully challenged discriminatory police and fire department hiring practices in communities across Massachusetts, including Boston. As a result of consent decrees, there are now hundreds of police officers and firefighters of color in Massachusetts.

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### **1974**

#### **Morgan v. Hennigan**

Federal court ordered the Boston Public Schools to desegregate in 1974, a landmark decision upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

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### **1970**

Published “The Quality of Justice in the Lower Criminal Courts of Metropolitan Boston,” a groundbreaking report that led to systemic court reforms.

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### **1968**

The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law of the Boston Bar Association was formed in 1968 in the midst of riots and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the findings of the Kerner Commission report (concluding that the nation was “moving toward two societies, one Black, one White – separate and unequal”). Funded with a grant from the Ford Foundation and contributions from Boston law firms, the Committee became the first of eight independent affiliates of the national Lawyers’ Committee. President Kennedy’s vision of the legal profession mobilizing its resources to support progress in civil rights came home to his birthplace. Gaspard D’Andelot “Don” Belin served as the first Chair of the Committee.

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### **1963**

On June 21, 1963, President John F. Kennedy and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy met with 244 leading American lawyers in the White House. The President and Attorney General made a special appeal to mobilize the legal profession to support the struggle for civil rights. The national Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law was created.

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