

# NACC

National Association  
of Counsel for Children

**Promoting Excellence**

**Building Community**

**Advancing Justice**

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*Strategic process guided by*



Community  
Wealth Partners

A Share Our Strength Organization

# 2019–2023 Strategic Plan



Reaffirming our founding commitment to advancing justice for children and families in the child welfare system with a bold vision to engage members and accelerate practice and policy reform.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### NACC's Strategic Planning Process

For more than 40 years, the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC) has strived to serve children and families by supporting a community of professionals dedicated to providing high-quality legal representation. NACC has trained tens of thousands of professionals, established a national, ABA-accredited certification for Child Welfare Law Specialists, produced pioneering publications—including *Child Welfare Law and Practice*—and steadfastly asserted the rights of children in hundreds of policy statements and amicus briefs in child welfare, juvenile justice, and family law systems.

With our 2019–2023 Strategic Plan, the National Association of Counsel for Children reaffirms our founding commitment to advancing justice, opportunity, and well-being for children and families affected by the child welfare system. While NACC will address the intersection of child welfare with juvenile justice and family law matters, NACC will focus on child welfare, its strongest area of expertise, in order to amplify and maximize our impact. The driving focus of NACC's new strategic plan is to accelerate the growth, experience, diversity, and leadership of a national community of children's lawyers and other child welfare legal professionals to **Promote Excellence**, **Build Community**, and **Advance Justice**.

NACC honed its organizational focus through a comprehensive strategic planning process guided by the consultants at Community Wealth Partners with the generous funding of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The strategic planning process included external interviews, focus groups, membership surveys, market research, financial models, fundraising strategies, and board and staff retreats conducted over a nine-month period. The NACC Board of Directors adopted the 2019–2023 Strategic Plan on August 22, 2018.

The new plan clarifies who NACC is, what NACC stands for today, and the means by which NACC will effect change as a national nonprofit children's legal advocacy organization. The plan sets NACC on a consistent course of growth to increase our impact through earned revenue and grant-funded programs led by NACC and in collaboration with organizational partners, members, and Child Welfare Law Specialists. NACC's board and staff are profoundly grateful for all of the contributions made during this process.

# NACC

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## Our Vision

Every child and family involved with the court system is well-represented by a lawyer who works to ensure that every child is raised by a nurturing family and has positive life opportunities.

## Our Mission

To advance the rights, well-being, and opportunities of children impacted by the child welfare system through access to high-quality legal representation.

## NACC Staff

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## NACC's Vision, Mission, and Impact

NACC advances the rights and opportunities of children in the child welfare system by ensuring they have the right to effective assistance of counsel. We provide programs and resources that improve the quality of legal representation for children, parents, and agencies; support a community of hard-working and dedicated professionals and help attract and retain diverse talent in the children's legal advocacy profession; and we advocate for policies that advance children's rights, including the right to counsel.

**Through our work to improve high-quality legal representation,** NACC has an impact on the following policy outcomes and priorities:

1. The child welfare court system is more likely to be fair and equitable, and protect children's well-being, rights, and opportunities.
2. Children can have equitable access to services and supports.
3. Children can be in loving, permanent families and exit the child welfare system as appropriate when their needs have been met.
4. Children and youth can be supported in ways that keep them from also being involved in juvenile and criminal justice systems.

## Our Program Areas and Priorities

Over the next five years, NACC will achieve results in three main program areas:



NACC will **Promote Excellence** by:

- » Increasing the national community of Child Welfare Law Specialists, as well as increasing the recognition, benefits, and opportunities of CWLS attorneys
- » Increasing child welfare attorney trainings, including Red Book trainings, subject matter webinars, and local trainings co-sponsored with state-based organizations
- » Publishing the 4th edition of *Child Welfare Law and Practice*, utilizing the opportunity to develop the most current and practical resource for practitioners



NACC will **Build Community** by:

- » Increasing support to a growing membership, with a specific focus on increasing diversity, and modernizing membership networking tools and resources for the field
- » Establishing law school chapters and state coordinators to build leadership and to organize events and develop local communities of practice
- » Building on NACC's growing national conference attendance to provide high-quality legal education, inspiration, and networking opportunities, and lead convenings to advance NACC's policy initiatives



NACC will **Advance Justice** by:

- » Publishing policy papers, assessments of children's right to counsel, amicus briefs, and policy statements consistent with NACC's policy agenda
- » Engaging NACC members in policy work on local, state, and national levels and mobilizing NACC's expanded membership, in alliance with affected youth and families, to advance our policy agenda
- » Increasing communications to raise awareness of the issues facing children in the child welfare system to generate public interest in NACC's work