



**IEH**  
EQUALITY OHIO

2026-2028 Strategic Plan  
**Executive Summary**

# Introduction

This strategic planning process began in January 2025 at the direction of EO Executive Director Dwayne Steward. The goal was to develop a clear strategic plan to serve as a roadmap for Equality Ohio (EO) to achieve organizational stability and build toward excellence and innovation. Each element within the deliverables and proposed changes was formulated with an eye toward creating a clear sense of who, what, and how work will be approached and carried out. The idea is that this plan will provide clear guidelines for mitigating burnout and mission creep, as well as driving all projects toward best practices and efficacy.

# Deliverables

This Executive Summary of Equality Ohio's (EO's) 2026–2028 strategic plan contains overviews of three key documents developed during the strategic planning process:

- Mission, Vision, & Values Statements
- Strategic Objectives
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Additional materials developed during this process include:

- Discovery Survey Report
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges (SWOC) Landscape Analysis
- Culture Document
- Project Assessment/Prioritization Checklist
- KPI Action Items
- Support to Build Out Three-Year Implementation Timeline

The strategic plan reflects collaborative work with staff, leadership, the board, and partner organizations to rethink assumptions, critically evaluate the organization and its work, and align behind shared priorities.

# Mission, Vision, & Values

## **Mission Statement:**

Equality Ohio drives innovative policy change locally and statewide, and delivers accessible legal support to advance lived and legal equality for LGBTQ+ Ohioans.

## **Vision Statement:**

An Ohio where justice, dignity, and self-determination belong to everyone.

**Core Values:**

**People First, Community Forward**

We center our work around the needs of the communities we serve, and we build our team from these same communities. That bridge between staff and community—and the investments we make in both—helps us to fuel forward progress.

**Liberation**

We believe that policies and laws that center the most marginalized members of our community create better outcomes for all of us. We are dedicated to advancing the liberation of all marginalized communities through inclusive, strategic efforts that promote self-determination through legal and lived equality.

**Trust & Collaboration**

We recognize that meaningful collaboration is rooted in trust. We are committed to fostering trust within our organization, among our partners, and across the communities we serve.

**Data-Driven**

We pursue excellence in all aspects of our work, continuously innovating and re-evaluating to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of our services, including the strategic collection and use of qualitative and quantitative data.

**Safety**

We prioritize the safety and well-being of our employees and the communities we serve, working diligently to create safer, more affirming environments. We understand that safety cannot be guaranteed—and that it looks different for everyone—but we are committed to listening, and supporting sustainable efforts that help build safer spaces for all of us.

# 2026–2028 Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives are a direct outgrowth of the discovery surveys we conducted at the outset of this process. As with each facet of this work, we aimed to keep the list succinct, clear, and achievable.

- 1.** Rebuild, strengthen, and forge new partnerships to help EO work more efficiently and better support the LGBTQ+ community.
- 2.** Develop innovative, data-driven advocacy programs with a JEDI lens for work in the legal clinic and at the state and local levels that advance lived and legal equality for LGBTQ+ Ohioans.
- 3.** Using industry standards and best practices, develop systems and processes that stabilize EO's culture and operations, pushing the organization into operational excellence with a JEDI lens.
- 4.** Diversify revenue streams to provide financial stability and continuity, which will help bolster capacity and increase staff retention.
- 5.** Define clear, sustainable direction for political action (both c3 and c4).

# Key Priorities

Our key priorities will be measured by metrics tied to strategic objectives that track progress and help to measure success across EO's work. This strategic plan includes key priorities to be used as part of the fabric of planning, execution, and assessment of EO's work.

# Program Priorities

## Local

Lay groundwork to pass equality measures in 30 municipalities within the 30 counties that do not currently have equality measures on the books by 2029 with the bold ambition of creating a state where no LGBTQ+ person is more than 45 minutes from a queer haven (defined as a county that has at least one nondiscrimination ordinance or equality measure in place).

## Statewide

Develop an integrated statewide harm reduction advocacy strategy at the statehouse that neutralizes existing threats and halts the current rise of youth suicides as a direct result of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation.

## Legal

Solidify sustainability of Legal Clinic with 20% growth in revenue through launch of the fee-for-service project and scaling up pop-up clinics across the state, while integrating this growth with the re-activation and expansion of EO's one-of-a-kind Attorney Referral Network.

# Infrastructure Priorities

## Operations

Create an operations framework that is fully integrated across development, communications, and human resources, with awareness of these policies and procedures communicated efficiently via written guidelines and toolkits, and integrated within an employee's daily tasks.

## Finance

Implement a diversified revenue acquisition plan with the goal of equal stratification of revenue across grants, donors, and enterprise endeavors. This includes rapid scaling of recurring donors programs, introduction of digital fundraising, launch of legal fee-for-service models, expansion of c4 business plan, etc.