

2022-25 Strategic Plan

PREPARED FOR THE JOINT RELIGIOUS LEGISLATIVE COALITION BY STRATEGIC CONSULTING & COACHING | JULY 2022

INTRODUCTION

Who are the JRLC partners?

As the largest and most inclusive multifaith public interest group in Minnesota, JRLC is authorized and governed by four Sponsoring Members: the [Minnesota Catholic Conference](#), the [Minnesota Council of Churches](#), the [Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas](#), and the [Islamic Center of Minnesota](#).

What does JRLC do?

JRLC is a unique, non-partisan, social justice organization that brings people of diverse faiths together to support the well-being of all Minnesotans. Faith leaders, congregants and lay leaders all take part in the work of JRLC – in fact, JRLC would not exist without so many voluntary members generously sharing their time, vision, and wisdom. Whether they are letter-writing, organizing or meeting with legislators, their participation is critical to the policy work of the JRLC.

When JRLC was founded in 1971, it was the first interfaith public-interest lobby group in the United States. Since then, JRLC has developed a comprehensive array of public policy statements and continually influences Minnesota legislation in many policy areas such as: welfare reform, housing, children and families, health care, human rights, criminal justice, environmental stewardship, tax policy, ethics in government, gambling, economic justice, bias crimes, firearms regulation, and other policy areas.

Why now?

In 2019 the JRLC Board acknowledged the need to gain clarity on objectives and set clear goals for the next 5 years. To do so, consensus was needed around key questions of JRLC membership, governance, and policy objectives. The need for sustainable structure and funding was also clear. To accomplish these goals, JRLC retained the consulting firm [Strategic Consulting and Coaching \(SCC\)](#) to guide us through the planning process.

Assessment Process

The process began with a comprehensive assessment of JRLC stakeholders. SCC conducted electronic surveys and phone interviews to gain insight on critical issues for the JRLC, including membership, levels of engagement among stakeholder groups and the appropriate future direction. The assessment gathered input from JRLC board members, sponsoring organizations, faith leaders and congregational members. A scan of relevant research about recent trends in faith communities both in MN and nationally, provided context to the work.

Planning Process

In early 2020, assessment was completed, and planning begun, only to be interrupted by COVID-19. Planning resumed in late 2021 and was completed in early 2022 with a core group consisting of representatives of each the coalition's four sponsoring organizations. To conduct the planning process, SCC facilitators used the [Technology of Participation \(ToP\)](#) facilitation methodology, which harnesses the energy and wisdom of groups to build consensus and to create and implement strategic plans. These processes draw on decades of international community development work. The JRLC process included input from the entire board as well as a deep engagement with the core group. After several months of work, the plan was completed and approved by the full board in June 2022.

What's next?

We are excited about the next stage of our journey, as we work to achieve the objectives laid out in the plan. We have already begun the process of streamlining our structure and creating expanded opportunities for policy work engagement.

We look forward to our continued story together!
Thank you for taking the time to engage with us!



MISSION

Multifaith partners advocating for public policies that promote the common good in Minnesota.

VISION

A vibrant collaboration of faith communities from all regions of Minnesota, deeply engaged in effective policy advocacy for the common good.

VALUES

HUMAN DIGNITY

We value the human dignity of each person and insist upon laws and policies that protect people who are poor and vulnerable.

SPIRITUALITY OF DIALOGUE

We value the many ways we listen and learn from each other and draw upon the wisdom of diverse faith traditions.

CREDIBILITY

We value JRLC's ability to base its work on facts and evidence, careful research, and a willingness to listen to a variety of voices, and the creativity of our proposals.

JUSTICE

We work passionately to bring about a community of right relationship, where each person contributes to and benefits from the common good.

PROPHETIC LEADERSHIP

We understand the indispensable role of religious communities to speak out effectively when our institutions or policies drift away from justice.

ACTION

We value JRLC members combining passion with moral values and acting boldly for the sake of justice in the public arena.

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

We value the contributions of citizens who govern our state so that, together, we protect human dignity and build up the common good.

CIVILITY IN PUBLIC LIFE

We see politics as public service carried out in civic friendship to overcome a style of politics that sees each other as enemies or opponents to be defeated.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We value the leadership role of JRLC's members and their ability to work in congregations and other settings to strengthen our voice for social justice.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES



We create broader collaboration within faith traditions and within political parties.



We achieve greater engagement with people of faith (congregation and district level).



We use a focused agenda around priority areas and achieved policy changes in a bi-partisan manner.



We create spaces/events to bring people together across political/religious divide in the common good policy work.



Our district representation is deeper – there are more people involved so we have a deeper bench to magnify work.



We achieve our work through the focused use of limited resources.

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS
ENGAGING NEW COMMUNITIES AND EXISTING NETWORKS IN ORDER TO THRIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create diverse representation within the JRLC, including religious, ethnicity, age, geography, political perspectives, etc. • Increase the number of individuals engaged in our work
GETTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize a board matrix to define needed expertise on the board and the program committee. • Work with sponsoring organizations to recruit qualified board and program committee members.
CREATING A NEW BOARD AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the governance structure to support the mission of the organization • Define the roles and responsibilities of the major entities that make up the JRLC around governance and operations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including board and program committee members, individual network, congregational network, staff and volunteers.
CLARIFYING AND DEEPENING THE POLICY AGENDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a policy agenda with three priority areas/advocacy pillars. • Create a new program committee to produce a legislative agenda and oversee its implementation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a clergy/faith-leader advisory group that provides advisory input to the program committee.

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS
STRENGTHENING OUR BRAND IDENTITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a communications and outreach plan that strategically positions JRLC and communicates the brand identity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a written description of what we do and how we do it, and how that makes us unique in interfaith policy work. • Put our commitment to faith and religious traditions at the center of our decision making, as core to our identity and therefore, our brand.
DIVERSIFYING OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO ASSURE SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit additional sponsor organizations that are either full sponsors or endorsers of the JRLC. • Create a financial plan with a more diversified funding source model.
UPGRADING ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities presented by new administrative systems with new fiscal and administrative sponsor. • Develop integrated data systems for membership, advocacy and development