

Tenacity & Transformation

Our Campaign for DC Children

“History will judge us by the difference we make in the everyday lives of children.”

— Nelson Mandela



For nearly three decades, Children’s Law Center has been building a strong foundation for DC children. Through individual and city-wide advocacy, we address the urgent **family**, **health** and **education** needs of children and families while creating lasting solutions to complex societal challenges. Families trust us because we are effective problem-solvers. City and community leaders turn to us as the experts who get results for DC kids.

Innovative approaches to address children’s complex needs.

In partnership with children and families, we use the law and navigate complex systems to address urgent problems impacting children today, improve the systems that will affect their lives tomorrow and strengthen our community so that change endures.

Special Education	Housing	Foster Care
Behavioral Health	Medicaid	Custody
Reunification	TANF	Adoption
SSI	Guardianship	SNAP

Together, we are changing the future for DC children.

Lasting impact requires partnership and collaboration. Our long and successful track record has allowed us to build and sustain critical partnerships with hundreds of pro bono partners, government leaders, pediatricians and advocates – a community committed to improving the lives of DC children.

60,000

children/families served

50+

new laws passed

\$50M

in Medicaid savings

2 in 3

District schools have behavioral health clinicians available for students

Thousands

of infants and toddlers with developmental delays now have access to services

8

innovative health clinic partnerships

10,000

children avoided extreme poverty due to TANF reform

90%

fewer children in foster care



We also led the fight to create two new government agencies – one to monitor the wellbeing of children in the foster care system and a second focused on enforcing housing code violations that harm children's health or risk their safety.

Three Decades of Impact & Innovation

1996

Founded Children's Law Center to address the comprehensive needs of DC children.

2003

Expanded representation of children in abuse and neglect cases through contract with DC Superior Court.

2009

Improved outcomes for children through rigorous program evaluation.

2015

Instituted onsite presence in Wards 7 & 8 through growth of our medical-legal partnership.

2019

Secured first-in-nation contract with managed care organization to address housing conditions for children with asthma.

1997

Established pro bono program to leverage resources from major law firms.

2002

Launched medical-legal partnership with Children's Hospital to address legal barriers to children's health.

2006

Established a policy team to expand advocacy efforts.

2010

Increased support for Hispanic and Latino families through new partnership. Launched appellate program.

2025-2027
Transformational campaign drives future impact.



We see the barriers to a child's success.

Despite the notable improvements we've made for children across the District, we continue to see poverty, trauma and racism eroding the all-critical foundation of family, health and education that children need to build their futures:

1 in 4 children live in poverty.

One serious health or education crisis can endanger the financial security of an entire family.

16,000 children live with asthma.

A child in Wards 7 or 8 is 20x more likely to end up in the ER for asthma than their wealthier peers, often due to mold, rodents or insect infestations.

13,000

students have been identified as needing special education services but often receive inadequate supports.

Thousands more are waiting for evaluations and struggling to learn.

60 days

on average pass by until a child in crisis can meet with a psychiatrist.

Each day without help has long-term, harmful effects on a child.



Our Bold Vision

Working directly with more than 5,000 children and families each year gives us a unique vantage point to identify the changing needs of the District's children.

Our current, effective programs seal cracks in the strong foundation children need to thrive. We will continue this important work while **launching new initiatives to prevent these cracks before** they even begin.

We have also seen great success by advocating for changes in the law – and by working with leaders in the community and the government to improve the systems that impact children's lives. But just as a hammer is the right tool for some projects and pliers are needed for others, **there are other legal strategies that we need** at times to get the right results.

Our new areas of work build on what we've learned:

- An engaged parent is the best protection;
- A child's health or educational difficulties can overwhelm families trying to survive in poverty; and
- Racism and other biases can lead to harm.

We also learned the best solutions require collaboration, and – most importantly – there are solutions to even the most complex problems.

Taken together, this transformative work will impact children and their families for generations to come.



Introducing Tenacity & Transformation Our Campaign for DC Children

To make this vision a reality, we are launching our first campaign in our nearly 30-year history to fuel innovative new strategies and ensure we are built to last.



We are looking to you – our donors, institutional funders and corporate partners – to help raise \$10 million from 2025-2027.

With your campaign support, Children's Law Center will:

Reach more children and families sooner – reducing harm and preventing trauma.

- Represent parents and caregivers when the burdens of poverty are destabilizing, with the long-term outcome of preventing entry into foster care and ensuring children can remain safely at home.
- Embed lawyers in prenatal care teams, family success centers and other neighborhood resources to reach parents before their children's educational and health issues overwhelm them.
- Work with DC government and community leaders to build the network of supports parents need to provide safe, stable homes for their children.



Add new tools to our toolbox.

- Use impact litigation, class action lawsuits, “state complaints” and other legal tools when necessary to achieve more widespread and lasting results.
- Create a community advocacy team—a network of former clients with the skills to help their neighbors advocate with schools and landlords.
- Leverage federal and local government funding to finance costly renovations of low-income housing to improve health and energy efficiency.
- Disrupt racism and bias through litigation and appellate advocacy and by applying a race equity lens to our policy advocacy.



Ensure our tenacious team has the foundation they need to advocate for DC children and families now and in the future.

- Ensure competitive compensation to recruit and retain the region's top staff and support their mental health and wellness as they work with families in crisis.
- Optimize new office space with improved technology for virtual court hearings, private rooms for on-site client engagement, and flexible space to support our hybrid workforce.
- Build strong change management practices to respond to an increasingly complex world.





Children's Law Center has the tenacity and problem-solving skills to tackle the newest challenges facing DC children. I am committed to achieving this vision and ensuring we are successful."



Judith Sandalow
Chief Executive Officer



Invest in the Future of DC Children

Your investment in our campaign will fuel our transformation and secure our long-term sustainability.

Early gifts will provide you with special opportunities to commemorate our 30th anniversary in 2026! Additional recognition opportunities are available for campaign gifts of \$100,000 or more.

Let's discuss how you can leave a philanthropic legacy for DC children.



250 Massachusetts Avenue NW • Suite 350
Washington, DC 20001
www.childrenslawcenter.org

Judith Sandalow
Chief Executive Officer
(202) 467-4900 x777
jsandalow@childrenslawcenter.org

Pam Shilling
Director of Individual
Philanthropy (202) 467-4900 x590
pshilling@childrenslawcenter.org

Briana Walsh
Chief Development Officer
(202) 467-4900 x582
bwalsh@childrenslawcenter.org

Erica McCollum
Director of Corporate & Legal Philanthropy
(202) 467-4900 x524
emccollum@childrenslawcenter.org