



Friends Committee
on National Legislation
Lobbying with Quakers

STATUS REPORT FOR JANUARY – JUNE 2024

IMPLEMENTING THE FCNL
2024-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN:

**TOWARDS THE
WORLD WE SEEK**

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The implementation of the FCNL 2024–2028 Strategic Plan: Towards the World We Seek began amid ongoing change and challenges globally and within FCNL.

Although the benchmarks for each of the action steps are still being finalized, there is ample evidence that, in the first six months of its implementation, FCNL is moving forward quickly to advance our new strategy.

Download the 2024–2028
FCNL Strategic Plan at
fcnl.org/strategicplan

As coordinator of the National Ceasefire Coalition, FCNL continues to prioritize ending the Israel-Palestine war and atrocities in Gaza and advancing a just and lasting peace for the Middle East. This has taken significant investment of our resources at FCNL and has resulted in 93 members of Congress calling for a ceasefire and notable policy shifts by the administration.

A number of our legislative priorities in the FY24 appropriations measures passed, including the reauthorization of the reporting requirement of the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-441). We also managed to protect the peacebuilding accounts which was the focus of our Advocacy Teams.

We continue to strengthen our nonpartisan voice in a deeply polarized political context in Congress, and to lift and partner with communities who are directly impacted by U.S. policy. This includes lobbying with frontline communities on the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (HR. 4426 / S.1751) and organizing with diaspora communities to confront militarism and racism in U.S. foreign policy.

Constituents and staff conducted more than 650 lobbying visits with Congressional offices and the administration through June. So far this year the political breakdown is 135 Republican and 174 Democratic offices.

This included the 333 participants, made up of mostly young adults, during our 2024 Spring Lobby Weekend who went on 100 lobby visits. This lobbying resulted in an additional 16 co-sponsors to the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding Schools Policies Act (S.2907/H.R. 5444). We were honored to partner with The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition and the National Congress of American Indians in this event.

Our grassroots advocacy network continues to grow. We added two more Advocacy Teams so far this year, bringing the total to 140 teams in 48 states. In addition, we have networked all the advocacy teams in 21 states for more state-wide coordination. In addition, we launched young adult pilot chapters in two colleges and in two high schools.

We continue advancing our efforts to become the beloved community we seek. By creating processes and policies within FCNL and clarifying our AJEDI commitments, we continue to live deeply into our these commitments. We are currently reviewing our AJEDI Statement for accessibility and ease of reading. We are connecting FCNL's Land Acknowledgment to our history by writing an introduction. We drafted three guides for: financial aid, ethical catering for FCNL's events, and the ethical collection of demographic data.

At the end of June 2024, FCNL's digital community numbered 188,489 email addresses, of which more than 29,000 joined in the last six months, largely through our work on the Middle East crisis. We have opened a new TikTok channel to diversify our social media platforms and engage more young adults who are already active there.

We completed the strategy of bringing our information technology infrastructure up to 2024 standards. Our network is backed up thrice, including the cloud, and we have installed a new terminal server, and ensured that no staff laptops are out of warranty. We are confident that other than laptop rotations, we have an IT infrastructure that is very secure and can meet our needs in the next five years.

As the first year of the strategic plan progresses, we will continue to wrestle with Bold Step 5, how to restructure and boldly resource FCNL to support current needs and future capacities. We need to steward a sustainable FCNL so that its programs and staffing match the anticipated needs and financial resources in the next five years.

In planning this strategy, we did not anticipate that contributions to non-profits (including FCNL) after the pandemic would drop—and continue to drop—as it has. Financially, we have reduced our costs for FY25 to about \$12.5 million. Starting FY26, we plan to have a balanced budget.

We have consulted with Brighter Strategies, who helped us develop the FY 2024–2028 Strategic Plan, on how to adjust it to meet this reality. Several of their clients are experiencing the same dilemma as FCNL. The Executive Leadership Team met in June to plan for balancing the budget by FY26.

These cross-cutting decisions mean that some key strategies may need to be implemented later or completely changed. We are working hard to make these decisions deliberately, maintaining a clear focus on the core functions of FCNL and its mission, our ongoing evolution as an organization, and continued progress within the framework of the strategic plan.





Photo by Taylor Monet/FCNL



Photo by Eric Bond/FCNL

Here are some highlights of the benchmarks for the FY2024–2028 FCNL Strategic Plan:

Strengthen FCNL’s nonpartisan influence among federal policymakers

Key Strategy 1: Increase FCNL constituents’ participation in DC-based advocacy

» Constituents and staff conducted more than 650 lobby visits with Congressional offices and the administration. So far in 2024, FCNL has engaged 135 Republican offices and 174 Democratic offices.

Key Strategy 2: Build stronger relationships with members of Congress

» Existing and new relationships in Congress resulted in the funding of key FCNL-supported programs in several FY24 appropriations bills. In addition, 16 new co-sponsors to the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding Schools Policies Act signed on following lobby visits with Spring Lobby Weekend participants.

» There are 41 bills in the House and the Senate that we are working on to pass.

✓ = Completed » = Highlighted or started

Key Strategy 3: Position FCNL as the most sought-after non-partisan faith advocacy organization.

» We are leading the coalition lobbying Congress for a ceasefire in the Israel-Palestine War. There are now 93 members of Congress calling for a ceasefire.

» At least 25 Congressional offices reached out to us for consultation and/or information

» FCNL lobbyists led in creating six interfaith letters and statements related to FCNL’s main domestic and foreign policy priorities.

Key Strategy 4: Partnerships with other organizations

» Three bipartisan Hill events were organized by FCNL or featured an FCNL speaker

» FCNL played a leadership role in organizing a joint Quaker organizational statement for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East



Transform FCNL’s grassroots advocacy network into a powerful, diverse, strategic, and intergenerational movement

Key Strategy 1: Develop intergenerational lobbying opportunities

- » Two pilot FCNL campus chapters were created at Earlham College in Indiana and Wilmington College in Ohio.
- » Through Friends Place, at least half of all visiting K-12 school groups are engaged in lobbying or other civic workshops.

Key Strategy 2: Strategically build advocacy networks in key states.

- » Three new Advocacy Teams were organized, bringing the total to 140 active teams in 48 states.
- » Statewide Advocacy Team networks now exist in 21 states.
- » We are working towards the implementation of pilot regional field organizers in FY25

Key Strategy 3: Implement a program for base-building.

- » FCNL’s digital community has grown to 188,489 email addresses, of which more than 29,000 joined in the last six months.

Key Strategy 4: Foster diverse engagement.

- » Organized Spring Lobby Weekend, with 333 diverse participants (70% of whom were new), many from Native American communities, who conducted 100 lobby visits. They lobbied for the establishment of a Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act (S.2907/H.R. 5444).
- » Preparations for the 2nd annual diaspora organizer gathering have begun. It will be hosted at Friends Place in late September.

✓ = Completed » = Highlighted or started



Advance policy changes through prophetic narratives using strategic communications

Key Strategy 1: Increase FCNL's media presence

- » Started a TikTok channel to diversify FCNL's social media platforms and reach a younger demographic.

Key Strategy 2: Elevate FCNL as the "go-to" voice on priority policy issues.

- » Monthly articles in Religion News Service and Inkstick.com are now aligned closely to FCNL's legislative agenda.

Key Strategy 3: Empower grassroots advocates.

- » There were 67 letters to the editor published, many of which included storytelling elements. There were 11 op-eds published bylined by FCNL staff and/or written with the help of FCNL staff.
- » Two workshops were conducted for FCNL advocates on writing letters to the editors.

Key Strategy 4: Expand the slogan, Love Thy Neighbor.

- » Three out of five email acquisition campaigns were conducted, securing more than 22,000 new names.
- » Incorporating Love Thy Neighbor slogan in subsequent email acquisition campaigns to test its resonance for a future long-term campaign

✓ = Completed » = Highlighted or started



Foster beloved community by integrating AJEDI

Key Strategy 1: Provide a framework to live our FCNL's AJEDI commitments.

- » A financial aid guide for FCNL events is being written to ensure consistency with AJEDI best practices.
- ✓ An ethical food sources guide was written for staff use when selecting catering for FCNL events.
- » FCNL's AJEDI Statement is being redrafted for more clarity, accessibility, and ease of reading.

Key Strategy 2: Increase a sense of belonging

- ✓ Staff training was provided in restorative practices and clearness process.
- ✓ Two-day staff retreat built a foundation of Quaker principles and practices and FCNL organizational culture.
- » The Advocacy Team is finalizing community agreements

✓ = Completed » = Highlighted or started

Key Strategy 3: Cultivate authentic relationships.

- » A reflection to complement FCNL's Land Acknowledgement is being finalized.
- ✓ Community circles are now routinely utilized to support staff to connect around various work-related challenging topics/issues

Key Strategy 4: Create a sustainable system of assessment.

- ✓ 2024 staff satisfaction survey was revised and administered. Results show progress in all areas of the staff community.
- » Ethical data collection guidelines were created to ensure FCNL properly collects information.
- » A working group has identified a key set of external and internal demographic data to collect.



Photos by Taylor Monet/FCNL



Restructure and boldly resource FCNL to support current needs and future capacities

Key Strategy 1: Resource the organization.

- ✓ Sustainability and stewardship are the focus of the FCNL infrastructure as it right-sizes. A fully staffed Finance Team supports this effort.
- » In terms of their satisfaction in working at FCNL, 36 people rated it from 4 to 5 (highest levels), while 14 ranked it below 4 (2024 Staff Satisfaction Survey).

Key Strategy 2: Reimagine FCNL's governance structures.

- » Nominating Committee is searching for a single treasurer for all three organizations to strengthen financial governance
- » A Governance Reform Working Group is considering how to improve our standing committee structure

Key Strategy 3: Conduct a successful comprehensive fundraising campaign

- » The quiet phase of the Justice Calls, Love Unites: Building Inclusive Democracy Campaign was launched in January. The Campaign Committee was formed and met in person for a kickoff event in May. As of June 30, we have \$2.5 million committed or 12.7% of our \$20 million).

Key Strategy 4: Ensure facilities and infrastructure meet organizational needs.

- ✓ IT infrastructure upgraded to 2024 standards: staff laptops are all within warranty, new terminal server installed (good for 5 years), Cloud backups created, IT network administrator hired.
- » Moving to the Cloud Taskforce created to build FCNL's data storage, file-sharing, and retrieval system (using SharePoint and Teams).
- » Facilities and Safety Taskforce created to maximize use of all FCNL's buildings

✓ = Completed » = Highlighted or started

Despite some challenges in the first six months of this new strategic plan, we are encouraged by our progress so far. We look forward to continuing to advance the FY 2024-2028 Strategic Plan: Towards the World We Seek.

“Hope is a creative tension between what **is** and what **could** and **should** be, each day doing something to **narrow the distance** between the two.”

— **Parker J. Palmer**