



THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL FOR
WOMEN IN NATIONAL SECURITY

LCWINS Strategic Planning Report

Introduction

The three priorities for LCWINS's Strategic Planning are Financial Sustainability, Organization & Governance, and Programmatic Work. We discussed these priorities and developed associated goals and strategies for the next five years. In addition, the following three statements were drafted and revised to reflect the impact LCWINS seeks to achieve and one overarching goal came out of all three discussions about the priority areas.

Three Statements

“Who we are for”:

LCWINS seeks to impact the face of senior leadership in a broad range of areas including the executive branch (political appointees, the foreign service, civil service, military, intelligence, federal law enforcement, and others), the legislative branch, think tanks, academia, industry, and nonprofits. We are for anyone interested in supporting sound U.S. national security policy-making.

Mission:

The Leadership Council for Women in National Security improves national security by ensuring that women, in all their diversity (including race, LGBTQ+, disability, and other forms) have fair representation at the decision-making table. LCWINS is an organization of women and allies from across the political spectrum working to advance and sustain gender inclusion at the highest levels of the U.S. national security and foreign policy workforce.

Vision:

American national security leadership should fully represent the diversity of the United States, which leads to better decision-making. Barriers to achieving gender parity in senior national security leadership should be permanently eliminated, and women should have access to a community of support as they ascend to senior positions.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Overarching Goal: Maintain an inclusive reputation by living our values clearly and publicly.

Strategy:

- Be fully inclusive toward women and allies with diverse financial means.
- Publicly communicate the sincere passion of LCWINS leadership for the organization, its mission, and its vision.
- Improve diversity and inclusion within LCWINS and at LCWINS events, including political affiliation, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, and other diversity categories.
- Publicly disseminate clear guidelines and criteria on how to be involved with LCWINS and the services or resources we provide.

Priority #1: Financial Sustainability

Goal #1: Programs are financially sustainable and fully funded.

Strategy:

- Fundraising goals should fully fund the LCWINS budget, which is approved by the board and executes our strategy, including projected cost growth (e.g. salaries and events) and 3-6 months of reserves.

Goal #2: Sources of funding are consistent with our values, mission, and vision.

Strategy:

- Draft an LCWINS values statement about funding sources.
- Seek balanced giving from diverse sources, including various corporate sectors, and balance corporate funding with foundation and individual funding.
- Fee-for-services revenue will be carefully considered.

Goal #3: Develop a “crawl, walk, run” approach to fundraising.

Strategy:

- *Crawl:* Diversify the funding base, sustain and grow individual funding base, sustain the short-term budget, maintain foundation support, seek to expand corporate donation base.
- *Walk:* Develop relationships and expand individual giving. Engage senior leadership in the fundraising concept. Sustain foundation and corporate giving.
- *Run:* Annual fundraising event and bigger incorporation of individuals into funding strategy, sustained corporate engagement and foundation support.

Priority #2: Organization & Governance

Goal #1: Strengthen accountability and effectiveness to ensure LCWINS meets its legal obligations; maintains its values-based approach to leadership; and achieves buy-in and engagement from the broader LCWINS community.

Strategy:

- Review and update committee structure for effectiveness and good governance. Clarify roles of committees and committee members, as well as LCWINS staff.
- Stand up an Organizational Structure Committee to make recommendations to the ExCom/Board for structural reform.
- Stand up additional advisory committees, sourced from the ExCom/Board or Leadership Council, with leadership from the ExCom, as needed.
- Create a way to affiliate with LCWINS for the broader community. The Organizational Structure Committee will make recommendations to the Board and inform the implementation plan.

Goal #2: Institute clarity and transparency on how to participate in LCWINS.

Strategy:

- Maintain a model of financial/in-kind commitments, seniority, and size of the Leadership Council.
- Develop transparent articulation of who we are looking for on the Leadership Council and the associated commitment.
- Develop a transparent process for nomination referrals, invitations and/or applications.
- Improve visibility and clarity on how committee assignments, and executive committee (i.e. board) appointments and decisions are made.

Priority #3: Programmatic Work

Goal #1: Reduce barriers that prevent women from holding senior national security decision-making positions.

Strategy:

- Develop a list of barriers and impediments to success. Prioritize the list, map programs to each barrier, and track progress.
 - Develop data and fact-based advocacy and communications strategy to educate the public, Congress, and other stakeholders on gender barriers and ways to address them.
- Elevate women's voices in public debate in national security.

- For positions that are politically-appointed:
 - Continue to help women successfully navigate the political appointments process and address associated challenges.
 - Develop credibility with GOP leaders and the potential GOP appointee pipeline.
- For positions that are not politically-appointed:
 - Assess needs within government (Executive Branch non-appointed and Congress), corporate, think tank, nonprofit, and academic sectors and develop programs to address those needs.

Goal #2: Contribute to the development of a broad, diverse, equitable and inclusive pool of mid-career to senior women who are interested in and capable of serving in senior national security leadership; expand the pool outside the usual inside-the-beltway sources and address identified sources of attrition or leaks in the pipeline, including at the most senior levels.

Strategy:

- Partner with women’s organizations in the private sector and the non-profit sector to encourage government service.
- Leverage barriers analysis to target attrition or leaks in the talent pipeline.
- Develop LCWINS values statement about mentoring, ask those within the LCWINS network to commit to a minimum amount of mentoring and facilitate opportunities to mentor through partnerships.

Goal #3: Build a community of support for women who are interested in and capable of serving in senior national security leadership positions.

Strategy:

- Create opportunities for women to build relationships with one another.
- Develop LCWINS as a source of help, resources, information and support for women seeking and serving in senior national security leadership.