

***WHY NOW?***  
***TNYBF STRATEGIC PLAN***  
***JUNE 2018 – MAY 2021***

***PROMOTING THE RULE OF LAW IN NEW YORK STATE  
THROUGH GRANTMAKING, COMMUNICATIONS, AND EDUCATION***



## **Introduction**

Over the past several years The Foundation has created a much more focused fundraising culture, emphasizing that practicing law is an honor and giving is a responsibility of the profession. Through the commitment and concerted efforts of donors, leadership, and staff, great strides have been made via the 2014-2017 strategic plan in increasing our revenue, grant program, and visibility.

There is more to be done.

The Foundation has selected for the theme of its strategic plan for 2018 – 2021 the Rule of Law, with the tagline, “Why Now?”

## **What Do We Mean By “Rule of Law”?**

For these purposes, we will adopt the ABA and World Justice Project’s definition of Rule of Law:

1. A system of self-government in which all persons, including the government, are accountable under the law
2. A system based on fair, publicized, broadly understood and stable laws
3. A fair, robust, and accessible legal process in which rights and responsibilities based in law are evenly enforced
4. Diverse, competent, and independent lawyers and judges

These ideals map on well to the Foundation’s Purposes, which are to promote and advance:

- Service to the public
- Improvements in the administration of justice
- Legal research and education
- High standards of professional ethics
- Public understanding of legal heritage

## **Why Now?**

In these fractious times, the Rule of Law is one principle that all can agree upon. It is a cornerstone of our democracy that deserves to be highlighted and celebrated even as we work to more fully realize it.

- Rule of Law adherence promotes a stable social and civic order, citizen engagement, and a positive climate for economic investment.
- New York and the U.S. are beacons of the Rule of Law around the world, yet there are some weaknesses in our own system, most particularly in the areas of accessibility/affordability of civil justice and the perceived fairness of criminal justice.
- Our grant making, communications, and educational initiatives will be thematically organized around this fundamental cornerstone of our democracy, with particular attention to these two areas where improvement is most needed.
  - Much of our grant making already addresses these areas of greatest need, e.g., civil legal services programs to underserved populations. It’s not a question of changing grantee strategy but of reframing our activities in Rule of Law terms.
  - Because public’s perception of the fundamental fairness of our system relies in part on “seeing themselves in our justice system,” we will continue to fund and grow diversity/pipeline initiatives through our fellowships, again reframed in Rule of Law terms.
  - Communications and educational programs will enhance public understanding of this important part of our state’s legal heritage and underscore the need for broad-based participation in civic life.

- By the end of the Strategic Plan period, we hope to effectuate measurable change in the public's understanding and perception as well as the reality of Rule of Law adherence in New York State, particularly in the focus areas detailed above. This change will be measured rigorously via comparison surveys we will commission at the beginning and the end of the period. Through our grant making, communications and educational activities in this period, we aspire to effectuate a statistically significant improvement between the first and second surveys, both in the focus areas detailed above and more broadly.

We invite you to participate in this planning period by giving today at  
[www.tnybf.org/donation](http://www.tnybf.org/donation)