

COLLEEN FOLEY



PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee

8/ 2018-present: Executive Director

- Chief Executive Officer of 110-year old public interest law firm, responsible for 52-person staff, inclusive of 32 attorneys, and responsive to 15-member Board of Directors
- Establish and maintain program initiatives and determine litigation undertaken by firm
- Set operational policy for firm statewide on civil equal justice issues
- Responsible for finances and management of internal accountant and annual external audit
- Manage \$5.5 million budget with goal of balancing revenue and expenditures
- Represent firm to media, legal profession, judiciary, and local and state political leaders
- Prepare grant applications and reports and maintain compliance
- Ensure firm equipment and technology is updated and that commercial, worker compensation, and malpractice insurance is maintained
- Responsible for personnel decisions involving recruitment, hiring, salary, promotion, and discharge

Office of Corporation Counsel, Milwaukee County

12/2006-7/2018: Deputy Corporation Counsel

- Advised executive and legislative branches on ethical, statutory, budgetary, contractual, and policy matters and drafted legislation to comport with law
- Represented county in successful oral arguments before the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh District
- Represented county before the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin in civil rights claims, the Milwaukee County Circuit Court in mental commitment, guardianship, and litigation matters, and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Equal Rights Division in employment matters
- Served as interim corporation counsel from June 2016 through December 2016
- Managed outside counsel agreements and litigation strategies
- Provided counsel and ensured compliance with open meeting rules and procedures for Milwaukee County Mental Health Board and Board of Supervisors
- Provided counsel for Behavioral Health Division on issues involving mental health and the criminal justice system

AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS, COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

- Milwaukee Hmong New Year Community Champion Award to Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee: 2025-2026
- Gwen T. Jackson Community Service Award to Colleen Foley from United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County: February 2022
- Milwaukee Bar Association Pro Bono Publico Organization Award to Legal Aid Society: October 2021
- Mandi Collaboration Award to Legal Aid Society and Milwaukee Rental Housing Resource Center: August 19, 2021
- Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office Commitment to Excellence Award to Colleen Foley: 2018

- Rotary Club of Milwaukee Presentation on Eviction Free MKE: February 17, 2026
- WUWM Public Radio Lake Effect on Eviction Free MKE: June 2024 panel member presenter
- Equal Justice Conference: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Data: Data is the Bomb!: May 2023 panel member presenter
- Wisconsin Judicial Conference: The 6th Amendment and Access to Justice: November 2022 panel member
- Wisconsin Eye Newsmakers episode on Evictions in Wisconsin During Covid-19: July 2020 panel member
- Wisconsin Society for Healthcare Risk Management Conference: Minors and Mental Health Treatment: November 2016 panel member
- Public Policy Forum Viewpoint Luncheon: When the Mental Health and Justice Systems Collide: Fall 2015 panel member

- Co-Chair: Civil Legal Aid Alliance of Wisconsin (2022 to February 2025)
- Member: Milwaukee Bar Association Courts Committee (2022 to present)

EDUCATION

1989-1993 *North Carolina Central University, Durham, NC – J.D.*

- Member of the North Carolina Central Law Journal (1991-1993)

1979-1983 *Boston College, Newton, MA – B.A. English*

STATE BOARD MEMBERSHIPS

- Bar Examination Licensure in Wisconsin (2002)
- Bar Examination Licensure in Indiana (1993) (inactive status as of 2002)