Children's Law Center - Whaley House
University of South Carolina School of Law

Whaley House
The Future Home of the Children's Law Center

Renovation Project

It is unacceptable that one-half of the children living in South Carolina appear in some negative measurement of child well-being. KidsCount ranks South Carolina 45th in the nation. For those children experiencing abuse and neglect, poverty, delinquency, learning disabilities, poor physical and mental health, and obesity, the Children's Law Center is the leader in the state's efforts to promote informed, sound public policy and to train child-serving professionals for skilled excellence in child protection and child advocacy.

Vulnerable children must rely on adults for their protection and a hopeful future. The outcomes for these children can be only as good as our laws and as good as the skill level of the adults who serve them. The Children's Law Center operates to serve both of these needs.

The Children's Law Center, founded in 1995 as a program of the USC School of Law, is a dynamic state leader for research, training, education, and policy development for children's issues. Annually, the Center conducts over 300 training programs, workshops, and meetings for more than 10,000 professionals and volunteers, including attorneys, judges, child protection caseworkers, guardians ad litem, and others who advocate the well-being of children.

The Center serves as the research, writing, and support staff for important State committees including the Legislative Committee on Children. The Center writes the Annual Report to the Governor and General Assembly to inform and promote system reforms for children's services.

Critically, the Children's Law Center has no on-site training and meeting facility. The Center is essentially a school without classrooms. The Center and other local child-serving organizations desperately need a high profile, convenient meeting and training center to raise awareness and to facilitate the sharing of common concerns and resources for learning, leadership, and training.

Columbia's prominent Whaley House (formerly the Dunbar Funeral Home) has been donated to serve as the Children's Law Center's training facility and offices. The 15,000 square foot Whaley House and its carriage house are ideally laid out for the Center's activities with excellent space for classrooms, meetings, workshops, staff offices, and ample on-site parking. In partnership with the Historic Columbia Foundation, USC is adapting and restoring the Whaley House (including re-wiring, re-plumbing, new HVAC, and fire safety) to become the permanent home for the advancement of children's issues. The Whaley House will soon be a busy hub of community and USC activity for child-related training, leadership meetings, and service projects.

The Center has secured the donation of the property and has completed its exterior restoration. An architectural master plan is in place to complete the $4 million interior renovations to the Whaley House and its carriage house. The project's master plan, all budget materials, and an on-site inspection of the Whaley House are all available for review. Your gift to the Whaley House project presents a unique opportunity to make a lasting impact on the well-being of our children and to preserve a treasured historic landmark.