

ACLU

Georgia

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028



Letter from Leadership

The ACLU of Georgia considers strategic planning to be a vital component of organizational sustainability.

It allows us to set goals, develop plans to achieve them, and measure our effectiveness. This new strategic plan intentionally builds from our previous plan (2020-2023) and the Strategic Affiliate Initiative Plan (2017-2020).

For this process, a diverse group of individuals from the organization's key areas of work met to develop our roadmap for the next four years. We evaluated the accomplishments and challenges of our previous strategic plan, surveyed all staff and Board members, considered our partner organizations, and evaluated our state's political landscape. From this, we identified our priority areas – our areas of focus and leadership – while simultaneously remaining committed to defending all civil rights and civil liberties through legal action, legislative and community advocacy, and civic education and engagement.

Voting Rights remains a cornerstone issue, foundational to our ability to advance our other priorities and ultimately fulfill the vision and mission of the ACLU of Georgia. We reaffirm our commitment to addressing **Criminal Legal Reform**, specifically mass criminalization and incarceration—one of the most glaring manifestations of anti-Black racism today. We will protect **Reproductive Justice** in a post-Dobbs era and continue to defend core civil liberties in our **Speech and Privacy** work. Recognizing the centuries of systemic racism that underpin the political

2024-2028 Strategic Priorities

The ACLU of Georgia will focus on the following five strategic priorities over the next four years:

- 1 **Voting Rights**
- 2 **Criminal Legal Reform**
- 3 **Reproductive Justice**
- 4 **Speech and Privacy**
- 5 **Organizational Effectiveness**

economy in Georgia, we will approach each of these areas through a lens of **racial justice**. Additionally, as we focus on these priorities, we will continue our collaboration with partners in LGBTQ+ Rights, Disability Rights, and Immigrant Rights.

Over the last seven years, our organization has grown and matured in important ways. With that in mind, in this plan we also focus on **Organizational Effectiveness**, expanding our funding, sharpening our capacities and implementing practices that improve our organizational culture. We will deepen our partnerships across the state, affirming Georgia's racial, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, with the understanding that progress will be achieved through these critical collaborations. We will continue to train the next generation of social justice leaders through our year-round paid internship program, and grow and cultivate a statewide volunteer base necessary to advance our mission.

We are serious and resolute in our convictions and will utilize the most effective and efficient tactics to further our mission. We look forward to working with you in this movement for civil rights and liberties.



Andrea Young
Executive Director



Jack Kennedy
President of the Board



Lisa Aman
Chair, Strategic
Planning Committee

Vision and Mission

The ACLU of Georgia envisions a state that guarantees all persons the civil liberties and rights in the United States and Georgia Constitutions and Bill of Rights.

The ACLU of Georgia enhances and defends the civil liberties and rights of all Georgians through legal action, legislative and community advocacy, and civic education and engagement. We are an inclusive non-partisan statewide organization powered by our members, donors, and volunteers.

Core Values

The ACLU of Georgia believes and acts upon five core values:

Liberty and Justice

We hold that all people are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and equality under the law.

Democracy and Patriotism

We believe that the United States must live out the true meaning of its creed - that all people are created equal, should have their voices heard, and should be able to participate in our political process.

Non-partisanship

Our work is guided by our principles, vision, and mission, without regard to political party or personality.

Equity and Inclusion

We create a culture of belonging for all within our organization, one that respects and embraces differences, treats people equitably, and empowers staff to do their best work possible.

Integrated Advocacy

We are committed to integrated advocacy - an approach that utilizes litigation, policy and legislative advocacy, community organizing, public education, and strategic communications to achieve our transformative vision for the future.

Strategic Criteria

To determine our strategic priorities, we defined six objective criteria, reflective of our values and focus.

Vision and Mission: Clearly enhances our vision and mission by maximizing impact for marginalized groups

Staff: Activates staff resources, time, talent, and leadership in a way that promotes our vision and mission; presents opportunities for integrated advocacy

Differentiation: Creates a lane that sets our team apart, uniquely positioning ourselves as a lead in securing civil liberties

Engagement: Creates a path to engage diverse audiences while broadening our base of members, volunteers, and supporters beyond financial contributions

Financial Resources: Has the ability to attract new donors and presents a compelling opportunity for current donors to increase their financial support

Visibility: Increases visibility, awareness, education, and recognition of our organization

Thank you to the members of our Strategic Planning Committee:

Staff: Lisa Adler, Nicole Berman, Christopher Bruce, Cory Isaacson, Andrés López-Delgado, Ben Lynde, Paige Manieri, and Nadine Marcelin

Board: Lisa Aman, Carlton Fields, Faraz Iqbal, Jack Kennedy, Natalie Keng, Kama Pierce, Gail Podolsky, and Feifei Sun

Voting Rights

Voting Rights have been at the center of the work of the ACLU of Georgia since before the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Rooted in the belief that universal voting is the foundation of democracy, our work specifically focuses on expanding access to the ballot for all voters—whether White, Black, Asian-American, Latine, or Indigenous—with an emphasis on the more than 30% of registered voters who are Black, historically the most intentionally and systematically disenfranchised.

The extreme voter suppression tactics used in the 2018 election followed by the disastrous June 2020 primary during the early days of the pandemic created a mandate for the ACLU of Georgia to significantly add to our toolkit to improve election administration and voter access. This has included election board monitoring and engagement, advocacy around election rules and regulations at the state and local level, poll worker training and recruitment, empowering young voters through establishing college polling locations, and expanding our litigation capacity.

Since then, our work has led to important wins in removing hurdles voters face including tens of thousands of dismissed illegal voter challenges, expanded Saturday voting and early voting on college campuses, additional Black-majority legislative districts, and extended deadlines and expedited delivery of delayed absentee ballots.

A record number of five million Georgians voted in 2020. The backlash that followed, in particular through the passing of SB 202, racial gerrymandering and a coordinated attempt to incite mistrust in our elections, heavily contributed to one million fewer votes cast in 2022. Georgia continues to be ground zero for the well-funded and organized movement to undermine our democracy ahead of yet another historic presidential election.

2024-2028 Vision

Over the next four years, focusing on those historically disenfranchised, the ACLU of Georgia will work to ensure that all Georgians have easy and equal access to the ballot and that each vote is given equal power.

GOAL 1

Challenge voter dilution and racial gerrymandering

GOAL 2

Promote legislation and policies that expand voter access

GOAL 3

Expand engagement with election administration

GOAL 4

Expand access for voters under 30 years old

GOAL 5

Be a consistent source of reliable information about election procedures and voter access



Criminal Legal Reform

Our country's mass criminalization and incarceration system has long devastated communities of color across the country.

Rooted in the history of slavery and expanded as a means of social control following the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, black communities have been particularly targeted. During the administration of former Governor Nathan Deal, there was bipartisan agreement that the economic and human impact of mass incarceration was too costly. Thanks to the tireless efforts of advocates, including the ACLU of Georgia, important progress was made in criminal legal reform at the local and state level, such as bail reform, juvenile justice reform, and decriminalization efforts that sought meaningful alternatives to incarceration.

However, in recent years we have experienced a troubling backlash against reform. At the state level, under Governor Kemp's administration, bail and pretrial detention reform has stalled and even reversed. The State has enacted harsh gang and domestic terrorism bills, as well as a hate crimes statute punishing speech. Georgia continues to have one of the highest incarceration rates in the country.

2024-2028 Vision

Over the next four years, the ACLU of Georgia will promote a vision of public safety that effectively protects all Georgians—one that does not rely on over-incarceration or the criminalization of poverty, but instead on evidence-based practices that keep our communities healthy, home, and whole. We will work to reduce the number of Georgians under correctional control, continuing to focus on minimizing the points of entry into the criminal legal system and preventing harsh sentencing.

GOAL 1

Challenge the overuse of pre-trial detention practices

GOAL 2

Combat harsh sentencing practices

GOAL 3

Educate the public and decision-makers regarding critical aspects of our criminal legal system



Reproductive Justice

In 2019, the Georgia legislature enacted one of the most restrictive anti-choice bills in the country in an effort to effectively ban abortions throughout Georgia. The ACLU was a lead organization that immediately challenged the law in court, winning a stay of the six-week ban for more than three years. Since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June of 2022, the ban has gone into effect, but our legal battle in state court continues.

Like all abortion restrictions, Georgia's ban disproportionately harms communities that already face barriers to health care: Black, Indigenous, and people of color; people with low incomes; and those who live in rural communities. Georgians overwhelmingly support a right to bodily autonomy. Nevertheless, lawmakers persist in enacting measures that restrict individual rights regarding personal health decisions.



2024-2028 Vision

Over the next four years, the ACLU of Georgia will work to ensure that every Georgian has the autonomy and freedom to access reproductive healthcare.

GOAL 1

Challenge limits on reproductive healthcare and investigate additional legal and policy advocacy opportunities as they arise

GOAL 2

Build capacity for the affiliate's reproductive justice work in collaboration with partners

GOAL 3

Educate and engage Georgia voters on reproductive justice issues

Speech and Privacy

The First and Fourth Amendments — guaranteeing the rights to free speech and privacy — are bedrock principles of the ACLU. We chose to bring these two issues together in this new strategic plan in alignment with the national ACLU's Project on Speech, Privacy, and Technology. Over the last several years, we have seen attacks on the First Amendment grow in troubling ways, including criminalization of protest, outlawing charitable bail funds, and persistent attacks on educators' ability to teach about race, sexuality, and other so-called "divisive concepts."

Georgia lacks any meaningful law protecting its citizens' personal information. With few exceptions, anyone is free to exploit personal and/or sensitive information of Georgia residents without consent, compensation, or transparency. Schools, airports, police body cams, and license plate readers are just some of the ways the government collects personal data. No meaningful oversight standards exist for processing, storing, or discarding the data. Too often, immigrant communities and communities of color are the target of surveillance efforts, leading to additional criminalization. In addition, people seeking abortions or gender affirming healthcare are increasingly subject to surveillance.

2024-2028 Vision

Over the next four years, the ACLU of Georgia will continue to combat threats to Georgians' speech, association, and protest rights, and take on new and existing threats to our privacy created by fast-evolving technology.

GOAL 1

Combat state and local threats to Georgian's free expression and protest rights

GOAL 2

Increase efforts to support Georgia's students, educators, and parents. Challenge book bans, censored curricula, the infiltration of religious nationalism, and the exclusion of religious diversity

GOAL 3

Develop and promote pro-privacy legislation and policies for adoption by government stakeholders



Organizational Effectiveness

Over the last several years, our organization made important strides in achieving organizational sustainability. In this next plan, we focus on organizational effectiveness. In 2023, we were selected as a Leadership Atlanta community project to identify strategies to take our volunteer base to scale, as a necessary ingredient to making a greater impact on the most pressing issues facing our region. We will prioritize implementing these recommendations, provided to us by a highly skilled group of Atlanta civic and business leaders.

We will focus resource development to maintain our current staffing level and expand programmatic work in alignment with this strategic plan. This includes sustaining our year-round internship program, which became a paid program in early 2023. Since doing so, more than 80% of our interns have been BIPOC, half of whom were Black and 10% of whom were first generation college students.



2024-2028 Vision

Over the next four years the ACLU of Georgia will foster an organizational culture that promotes Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB). To navigate the shifting landscape and effectively advance our mission, we will prioritize collaboration, continuous learning and adaptability while also increasing resource development for programmatic growth.

GOAL 1

Strengthen and grow the statewide network of active ACLU of Georgia volunteers through increased volunteer program capacity

GOAL 2

Sustain our current staffing level and raise additional resources for programmatic growth based on this plan's strategic priorities

GOAL 3

Implement a talent management strategy to recruit, hire, and retain high-performing and diverse talent

GOAL 4

Define and establish an organizational culture that improves and strengthens our impact and effectiveness