



Strategic Plan

2025-2028

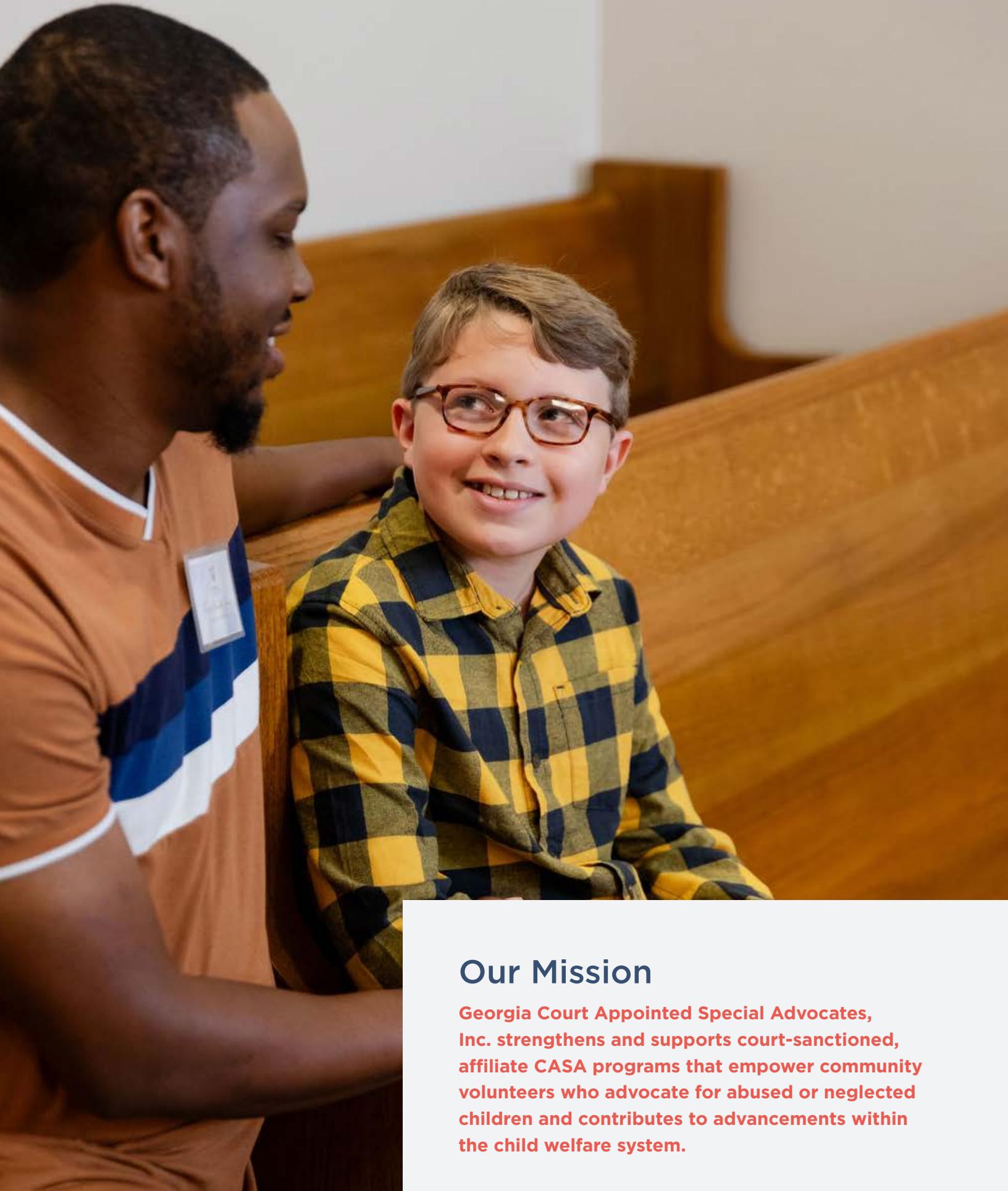


CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates

FOR CHILDREN

GEORGIA



Our Mission

Georgia Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc. strengthens and supports court-sanctioned, affiliate CASA programs that empower community volunteers who advocate for abused or neglected children and contributes to advancements within the child welfare system.

Our Vision

All children who experience abuse or neglect have the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential with the support of permanent connections to family.



Our Values



Collaboration

Serves in partnership with local CASA affiliates and the Georgia child welfare system to meet shared objectives of elevating the best interests of each child and building strong families



Compassion

Demonstrates respect for all individuals through actions, words, and service



Accountability

Operates with integrity and responsible stewardship of resources leading to a positive impact on the community

Organizational Background

Since our founding in 1988, Georgia CASA has led efforts to expand CASA advocacy to all 159 counties. With the presence of a CASA program, courts and families have the benefit of a CASA volunteer in a dependency (child abuse or neglect) proceeding to provide first-hand, objective information and best-interest recommendations to the court. A CASA volunteer brings urgency to each child's case and serves as a trusted, committed adult for a child through the time in foster care.

Georgia CASA is committed to maintaining a network of well-administered affiliates that operate independently with mutual accountability, resulting in the highest level of advocacy for all of Georgia's dependent children. Georgia CASA provides a wide array of comprehensive support services to the affiliates, including training for new and experienced affiliate volunteer support staff, recruiters, and affiliate directors as well as volunteer advocates; coordination of and support for volunteer recruitment, screening, and training; ongoing affiliate program management consultation and consultation, support, and tools for evaluation and outcome measurement; coordinated communications with affiliate CASA boards, leadership, staff, and volunteers, as well as supporters, judges, child welfare partners, and donors; support and coordination of and assistance with affiliate funding resources; coordination of public awareness campaigns, tools, and resources; engagement in legislative education and advocacy; and support of affiliate development of the CASA program and services.

The CASA network receives significant support and financial investment from the state General Assembly as well as the state and local judicial branches. In 2007, the state law was amended to include CASA volunteers as lay Guardians ad Litem (GALs), a required representative in all juvenile court cases involving child abuse or neglect. In 2013, because of the efforts of a coalition of child welfare and policy organizations, a comprehensive re-write

of the juvenile code was adopted and elevated CASA volunteers to the preferred best interest advocate for children in dependency proceedings. The CASA network is highly regarded and seen as an integral part of the state's child welfare system. Georgia CASA maintains strong relationships with agency, judicial, and policy appointees and leaders. The state's child welfare leadership have all demonstrated support and value for CASA.

With a team of 12 highly qualified, long-tenured staff, Georgia CASA proudly represents the CASA network and its 46 affiliates, 250 affiliate staff, 500 affiliate board members, 2,500 CASA volunteers, and hundreds of supporters.

In light of its progress and success, Georgia CASA also recognizes its commitment and responsibility to expand CASA advocacy to all children and their families who must experience foster care. In 2024, Georgia CASA invited its leadership, affiliates, partners, staff, and supporters to be a part of this strategic planning endeavor. Along with its growth plan and core supports, Georgia CASA embraces its unique role as a visionary, locally-informed state leader that affords the network access to expanded resources and expertise in support of high-quality, culturally-informed, effective volunteer advocacy. At a time when volunteer-driven organizations are facing challenges, scrutiny of the child welfare system is intensifying, and the demand for expertise and resources is increasingly competitive,

**Georgia CASA
continues to be
responsive to the
broader community
it serves.**

Record of Success

- Developed and expanded services to cover all 159 counties in Georgia
- Achieved inclusion of CASA in state law in 2007, with codification as the preferred best interest advocate in 2013
- Served over 200,000 children through the dedication of 49,000 volunteers since inception
- Established a signature event attracting over 300 supporters for 18 years+
- Secured longstanding support from private foundations
- Successfully implemented three statewide growth plans
- Increased state funding steadily over three decades
- Collaborated extensively with child welfare agencies and organizations
- Recognized as a leader at the national, state, and local levels

Organizational Awards

- Above & Beyond Award by the Promoting Safe & Stable Families (PSSF) Program of the Georgia Department of Human Resources
- Child Advocacy Organization Award by Juvenile Law Committee of the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia
- Big Voice for Children Award Recipient from Voices for Georgia's Children
- Collaboration and Innovation Awardee from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
- Shining Star Award from the Multi-Agency Alliance for Children





Organizational Priorities

As Georgia CASA continues to expand and strengthen its network of affiliates, the overarching goal remains the same: to ensure every child in the foster care system has access to high-quality volunteer advocacy. Central to this mission are key metrics that guide our progress and define our impact: increasing the number of volunteers and ensuring they receive thorough training and support, growing the number of children served by CASA advocates, and securing sustainable financial resources to support our expanding network. These metrics are at the heart

of our priorities, serving as benchmarks for success as we enhance our capacity and continue to meet the growing needs of Georgia's child welfare system. With a data-driven approach and a commitment to excellence, we are focused on elevating the quality of our advocacy, strengthening the affiliate network, and broadening our reach. The following strategies outline the specific steps we will take to achieve these goals, ensuring that Georgia CASA remains a leader in child advocacy for years to come.

Statewide Advocacy Alignment

To ensure that CASA advocacy operates at a high standard throughout the state, Georgia CASA will focus on creating support structures to strengthen affiliates in meeting the needs of children and families and courts.

Our Goal: Work with affiliates to create a unified approach and ensure consistency and quality of advocacy.

THE STRATEGIES:

1. Develop and implement a set of standardized operational, advocacy, and service delivery protocols across all affiliates while allowing flexibility for local needs.
2. Build stronger communication systems between the state office and affiliates to streamline messaging, advocacy efforts, and community engagement.
3. Expand and enhance training programs for affiliates, staff, and volunteers by offering standardized, accessible, and regionally tailored training sessions.
4. Develop a continuous quality improvement framework to ensure consistency long term.
5. Improve data collection, reporting, and sharing between Georgia CASA and our affiliates.

METRICS OF SUCCESS:

- ✓ Communication System Effectiveness
- ✓ Affiliate Satisfaction Levels
- ✓ Affiliate Implementation Rate
- ✓ Partner Satisfaction Levels Increase In Reporting Efficiency
- ✓ Data Repository Utilization



Data-Driven Impact

By standardizing data processes, developing key performance indicators, and improving reporting systems, Georgia CASA aims to ensure comprehensive and accurate tracking of outcomes. This data-driven approach will enable informed decision-making, improve service delivery, and support advocacy efforts.

Our Goal: Improve data collection and analysis capabilities to better measure and assess our impact across the state.

THE STRATEGIES:

1. Develop benchmark data for affiliates to compare their performance across each other, allowing for a better understanding of statewide impact.
2. Standardize data tracking across all affiliates, creating uniform templates and systems for data reporting, with a particular focus on metrics that are currently inconsistently tracked (e.g., source of CASA requests, volunteer per case ratio).
3. Establish a standardized framework for data analytics across all affiliates, allowing for flexibility in local reporting while maintaining consistency in key performance metrics.
4. Explore partnerships with vendors to develop or enhance subscription-based data tracking systems ensuring all affiliates can afford and access the necessary technology.
5. Embed data collection and analysis into the fabric of Georgia CASA's operations to ensure data is consistently gathered and utilized for decision-making.

METRICS OF SUCCESS:

- ✓ Data Accuracy
- ✓ Outcome Data Provision
- ✓ Investment in Data Systems
- ✓ Accessibility of Metrics
- ✓ Data Leadership Cohort
- ✓ Timeliness of Data Access



Visibility and Brand Awareness

Georgia CASA aims to significantly improve our visibility and engagement with the community, volunteers, donors, and key stakeholders. By strengthening our storytelling, marketing efforts, and outreach initiatives, Georgia CASA will be better positioned to advocate for its mission and drive impact across the state.

Our Goal: Create a cohesive brand identity and strategic outreach plan that will grow brand awareness, increase volunteer recruitment and retention, expand the donor base, and foster meaningful partnerships.

THE STRATEGIES:

1. Adopt a unified brand message that resonates across all affiliates while maintaining flexibility for localized communication.
2. Expand on our people-centered storytelling approach to highlight the experiences of volunteers, children, and families impacted by CASA's work.
3. Tailor volunteer recruitment strategies based on community type, ensuring consistent branding while providing room for adaptable messaging on the local level.
4. Leverage existing relationships to bring in new supporters and organizations, creating a network that can help sustain long-term engagement.
5. Host both physical and virtual events to foster community dialogue and connect with potential volunteers, donors, and partners.
6. Gather and analyze marketing metrics consistently to gauge the effectiveness of outreach efforts and identify areas for improvement.

METRICS OF SUCCESS:

- ✓ Increase In Volunteer Interest Forms
- ✓ Number of New Partnerships
- ✓ Fundraising Dollars Raised
- ✓ Number of First Time Donors
- ✓ Increase in Marketing Reach



Internal Capacity Building

Georgia CASA aims to strengthen our internal foundation by optimizing resources, processes, communication channels, and personnel capabilities. This work will ensure Georgia CASA operates efficiently and effectively while meeting its mission to strengthen affiliates and advocate for families across the state.

Our Goal: Build organizational capacity to manage projects, foster a culture of continuous growth and development, and more effectively support affiliates.

THE STRATEGIES:

1. Streamline internal processes through project management tools that clarify responsibilities, timelines, and roles.
2. Create opportunities for continuous professional development by offering coaching, subject matter expertise training, and incentives for staff to engage in learning.
3. Integrate and standardize communication platforms across the organization to enhance collaboration and information sharing.
4. Build capacity for delivering scalable training programs by creating partnerships, leveraging virtual platforms, and managing a statewide pre-service training program or continuum.
5. Implement a funding strategy to increase board engagement and participation in and through fundraising.

METRICS OF SUCCESS:

- ✓ Staff Development Participation
- ✓ Professional Development Spending
- ✓ Staff Satisfaction Elevated
- ✓ Additional Engagement Opportunities Provided
- ✓ Growth in Board Contact Giving
- ✓ Increase in Board Giving Levels



Environmental Scan

The **environmental scan research project** was developed to better understand the organizational environment surrounding Georgia CASA. By assessing other organizations in similar sectors or models in different fields, Georgia CASA's Strategic Plan process can include a deeper understanding of the community groups and individuals these other organizations serve, their programming models, and their impact.

The list of organizations that were part of this research project are:

- Atlanta Community Food Bank
- Breakthrough Atlanta
- California CASA
- CHRIS180
- FosterLove
- Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students
- Georgia Family Connections
- Kentucky CASA Network
- Multi Agency Alliance for Children
- Texas CASA

Georgia CASA Differentiators

Below are a few of the ways that Georgia CASA stands out from other peer organizations in this research.

- **Visibility of Network and Affiliates:** Georgia CASA does an excellent job highlighting and showcasing their many affiliates and the breadth of their network. This affiliate-first perspective highlights the values that the organization uses to engage with affiliates and establishes a brand identity as well.
- **Organic Community Engagement:** Across all social media platforms, Georgia CASA engages its community and recognizes them with pictures and stories. These efforts create a sense of belonging and appreciation among their supporters and affiliates, which helps to foster long-term commitment and involvement.
- **Robust Volunteer Engagement and Training:** Georgia CASA places a significant emphasis on recruiting and training volunteers. The content available for people who want to learn what being a volunteer is like is extensive, and there are many clear and concise avenues and entry points for people. This focus on volunteerism not only enhances the organization's capacity but also fosters their identity and brand around community involvement and collective action.
- **Emphasis on Data and Outcomes:** Georgia CASA places a strong emphasis on sharing data and statistics, tracking outcomes, and using data to drive action. They have an extensive list of resources and statistics that allows people to learn more, understand the sector, and become better informed volunteers. Resources like the Media Kit, their Child Welfare Statistics, and their on-demand training recordings are excellent tools that keep audiences informed and clear.

Major Takeaways

Based on the research conducted, here are the major trends and takeaways seen throughout all the organization profiles.

- **Collaboration & Strategic Partnership Building:** Organizations demonstrate the power of strategic partnerships and collaborations. By creating robust networks to address issues, they emphasize the strength of their partners and position their organizations as conveners. They strategically highlight their partners through individual stories and posts on social media, showcasing the impact of these relationships on their programs. Additionally, leveraging support and funding through advisory boards and leadership circles of well-connected individuals enhances their ability to reach a wider audience.
- **Comprehensive and Holistic Services:** Organizations such as the Atlanta Community Food Bank (ACFB), Multi-Agency Alliance for Children (MAAC), and Chris 180 exemplify a comprehensive and holistic approach to community support by addressing the multifaceted needs of their beneficiaries. Organizations are demonstrating the importance of offering a wide range of services, or partnerships that can make that possible, to effectively support and uplift communities in multiple ways. A “one-stop-shop” mentality is seen across all organizations, along with an understanding that many of the issues that families and children face intersect with one another.
- **Community Feedback & Involvement:** Actively seeking and incorporating community feedback into the messaging, data and research, and improvement of programs are crucial to many of these organizations. This participatory and people-first approach ensures that audiences see the organization’s accountability and transparency, leading to greater buy-in and support.
- **Advocacy & Policy Influence:** Organizations effectively use advocacy and policy data and information to drive their mission and impact online. They educate their audiences on advocacy and ensure that the policies they advocate for are clearly explained. By grounding their daily operations to greater advocacy efforts in robust research, they can effectively engage audiences and shift community perceptions through evidence-based approaches.
- **Clear Communication & Branding:** The strongest organizations in this research all understand the importance of clear communication and consistent branding across all platforms, including social media and websites. They maintain a consistent visual identity and use social media effectively to engage with their audiences, ensuring that their messaging is clear and compelling. Transparency is key, and they achieve this by providing professional reports and newsletters that detail their work and impact. Additionally, they recognize and appreciate their supporters, fostering a strong sense of community and belonging. Clear and compelling mission statements, coupled with people-first language in branding and marketing efforts, further amplify their impact.

Interested Parties Feedback

Purpose Possible engaged with a diverse range of interested parties to gather feedback through surveys, one-on-one interviews, and a listening session with staff. Participants included CASA affiliate organizations, partner organizations, philanthropic partners, and the broader community served by Georgia CASA. Overall, we received completed survey responses from 36 members of the community and conducted 7 interviews.

✓ **Strong Leadership and Mission-Driven Culture:**

Georgia CASA is praised for its forward-thinking leadership and dedication to its mission of supporting children in foster care. Leaders are seen as proactive in connecting with other child welfare and nonprofit leaders to navigate challenges and opportunities effectively.

✓ **Effective Collaboration and Support:** The

organization is noted for its extensive support and collaboration with affiliates, fostering a network that encourages sharing of resources, practices, and mutual support. This collaborative approach helps create a cohesive and supportive environment for all interested parties involved.

✓ **Commitment to Transparency and Integrity:**

Transparency is both a current strength and an area for improvement. Interested Parties value the organization's integrity and the transparency within its operations but suggest there is room for more clarity and openness, particularly in interactions with state partners and in defining roles and responsibilities within the CASA network.

✓ **Need for Enhanced Volunteer Recruitment**

and Data-Driven Improvements: Increasing volunteer recruitment and improving marketing efforts are identified as critical areas for growth. Additionally, leveraging data analysis to enhance outcomes and better track the organization's impact are seen as essential steps to furthering Georgia CASA's mission and effectiveness.



Methodology

Georgia CASA began working with Purpose Possible in March, 2024 on a strategic plan. The steering committee helped us identify questions to ask, stakeholder to survey, and generally ensure we were staying true to Georgia CASA. We spent May and June gathering interested party feedback through one-on-one interviews and surveys. We held a retreat with the full board and members of the Georgia CASA staff in late July. Following the retreat, the steering committee gathered several more times in August to finalize our plans. **This strategic plan is a result of all of that work.**

Our steering committee was made up of the following individuals:

Elena Chang, Chair
Kim Harrington
Julia Neighbors
Kip Lynch
Lauren Hyatt
Daniel Hathaway
Susanna Patterson
Amanda Camp
Deidre Hollands
Angela Tyner

Deep Dive Sessions

Don Miller
Sandy Day
Carlene Redmond
Laura Brown
Rachelle Moseley
Ewansiha Simmons
Lori Derhammer
Shauna McCullough-Hightower
Ali Jordan

Purpose Possible

Taryn Janelle
Natalia Garzón Martínez



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