



GEORGIA WATCH



three-year strategic plan
2019-2021

Vision, Mission and Principles

Vision

Equity and justice for all Georgia consumers.

Mission

To protect and inform consumers so all Georgians prosper and communities thrive.

Guiding Principles

We believe...

To achieve our vision, equity must be a shared value among all Georgians.

Georgians should thrive wherever they choose to live.

Justice means all communities know and assert their rights.

To succeed, Georgia Watch must be a relentless advocate for all Georgia consumers.



Priority Impact Areas

Georgia Watch focuses on the issues we know have a significant impact on consumers' economic security and quality of life. Problems impacting quality of life are interconnected; solutions must be holistic.



Consumer Energy

We advocate on behalf of residential and small business customers before the Public Service Commission (PSC) and at the State Capitol. We raise public awareness of PSC proceedings and other energy issues impacting our state's environment, economy and ratepayers' pocketbooks with a particular focus on assisting lower-income consumers who are particularly burdened by the high cost of utilities.



Healthcare Access

We seek to ensure and expand access to safe, quality, affordable healthcare for all Georgians. We offer direct assistance through our toll-free help line, educational resources and workshops. We encourage the adoption of hospital policies that benefit vulnerable consumers, produce in-depth policy reports, raise awareness through the media, convene stakeholders to forge partnerships for change and promote policy solutions to achieve health equity.



Financial Protection

We focus on ensuring laws are in place to protect consumers' financial wellbeing, such as preventing predatory lending, and on opening doors to the financial mainstream. We assist consumers with their financial literacy by teaching the importance of bank accounts and credit ratings, effective ways to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft and fraud, proactive approaches to financial management, and avoidance of predatory lending products that often lead to additional debt. We particularly work to help disenfranchised communities gain access to financial products and services to close opportunity gaps and promote economic mobility.



Access to Civil Justice

We work to protect the right to trial by jury and promote access to the courts for all Georgians. At the state and federal levels, we oppose laws that place limits on access to the civil justice system, cap damages, expand the use of mandatory arbitration, and limit class action lawsuits. We file amicus briefs in important Georgia appellate court cases that impact consumers' access to civil justice. We also inform the public about important judicial decisions that may affect consumer rights.

Strategic Plan 2019-2021 Goals & Strategies

Goal 1: Conditions in place to effect policy change in Georgia Watch's 2019-2021 priority impact areas to benefit Georgia's consumers.

Strategies for Goal 1:

1. Build a connected network of advocates capable of effecting policy change.
2. Regularly inform partners, policymakers, and community-based organizations (CBOs) about our work to increase the number of them coming to us around consumer protection issues.
3. Build strong partnerships in all regions of the state through our statewide coalition model.
4. Leverage our strong partnerships to engage communities and raise awareness of consumer issues.
5. Educate CBOs and consumers around the state about advocacy and encourage them to engage in advocacy.

Goal 2: Policy change in Georgia Watch's 2019-2021 priority impact areas to reduce the high cost of poverty and eliminate disparities based on race and place.

Strategies for Goal 2:

1. Conduct research, gather data, and collect stories from consumers to identify and demonstrate policies and practices that unfairly result in higher costs of poverty.
2. Conduct research, gather data, and collect stories from consumers to identify and demonstrate policies and practices that disparately impact consumers because of their race or where they live.
3. Develop legislative recommendations to eliminate policies and practices that contribute to the high cost of poverty and the disparate impacts tied to race and place.
4. Produce a comprehensive policy report outlining the policies and practices that we recommend changing to reduce the high cost of poverty and eliminate disparate impacts tied to race and place.



5. Engage and mobilize partners, policymakers, CBOs, and communities in support of these policy recommendations.

Goal 3: Increased 1) recognition of equity as a shared value and 2) justice afforded all Georgia consumers.

Strategies for Goal 3:

1. Create conditions necessary to facilitate understanding of the factors that disparately impact low-wealth communities, communities of color, and rural communities by sharing stories and promoting dialogue.
2. Educate state leaders, policymakers, and regulators so they recognize and embrace their role in bringing about change.
3. Engage partners, CBOs, communities and policymakers in conversations about shared values.
4. Educate consumers about their rights and how to assert them.

Goal 4: Organizational capacity required to expand impact of Georgia Watch per 2019-2021 Strategic Plan.

Strategies for Goal 4:

1. Create, adopt, and follow a comprehensive development plan to help the organization meet the resource needs outlined in our strategic plan.
2. Expand the staff size to at least five.
3. Produce and implement a comprehensive communications plan to support our mission.
4. Develop and maintain an active board of directors with increased demographic diversity, expanded expertise, improved governance capability, and representation from throughout the state.

