

*Court of Appeals of Georgia*



**Strategic  
Plan**

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*Mission*

1. To review decisions of trial courts and correct errors of law which have been properly brought before this Court.
2. To assist litigants to achieve final and just resolutions of their disputes and contribute to the orderly development of Georgia law through orders and opinions based on logic, reason, persuasion and precedent.

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*Vision*

**Timely justice to parties and  
clear and sound guidance to  
Georgia trial bench and  
practicing attorneys.**

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## ***Core Business***

**Process and decide cases filed in court by parties (attorneys and pro se litigants).**

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## ***Core Values***

- Impartiality of Decision Makers
- Independence of Judicial Decision Making
- Accessibility to Process by Public
- Integrity of Judicial Process
- Well Reasoned and Articulated Decisions

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## ***External Factors***

- Increasing diversity of the Georgia population and numbers of persons filing as pro se litigants.
- Changes in technology.
- Growth in Atlanta metropolitan area and transportation and environment issues relative to that growth.

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## ***Internal Factors***

- Continued growth of workload.
- Trained staff attorneys relative to opinion writing.
- Remote access.
- Public access to information via court website.

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## ***Organizational Goal***

- **Improve efficacy of internal court's structure.**
  - Enhance Security
  - Improve Facilities
  - Uniform Application of Policies and Procedures
  - Business Continuity

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## ***Organizational Goal***

- **Increase efficiency and effectiveness of case processing by automation through use of technology.**
  - Online Legal Research
  - Court Web Portal
  - E-Filing and Electronic Documents Database
  - Business Continuity

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***Service-Related Goal***

- **Improve access to public information.**
  - History and Purpose of Court Video
  - Public Information via Web Access
  - Pro se litigant Video

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***Service-Related Goal***

- **Improved Opinion Writing.**
  - Development of Staff - In-house Training.
  - Reduce Caseloads for Judge/Staff.

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***Goal***

1. Improve efficacy of internal court's structure.

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***A. Enhance security through assessment, improved controlled access, and emergency procedures.***  
***(4 yr. plan)***

**Strategic Objective:** Identify and rectify security weaknesses within Court offices. Develop and train court personnel regarding emergency procedures.

**Strategic Outcome:** Improved security and safety of court personnel and visitors.

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***B. Improved Facilities***  
***1. Consolidation of judges and staff.***  
***a. Consolidate judges into one building***  
***(Judicial Building) (1-2 yr. plan)***

**Strategic Objective:** Improve security for judges by being in one building. Facilitate work within panels by being more proximate to each other.

**Strategic Outcome:** Networking/Communication improved for dialogue/conference of cases. Greater security for judges and staff.

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***b. Renovation and redesign all judges' offices into self-contained suites (LT).***

**Strategic Objective:** Relieve cramped working conditions for judges and staff. Consolidate judges and staff.

**Strategic Outcome:** More efficient use of resources when judges and staff are proximate to each other. Better collaboration on cases and coordination of caseload.

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**2. Consolidation of administrative support services in a single building. Relocation and redesign of administrative offices. (1-2 yr. plan)**

**Strategic Objective:** Relieve cramped working conditions for Clerk's Office and Central Staff. Consolidate administrative services in one location.

**Strategic Outcome:** Improved access for public to Clerk's Office. Improved working conditions and filing storage for Clerk's Office. Consolidation of Central Staff for better coordination of work and sharing of printed research materials. Improved coordination and cooperation of all administrative services.

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**3. Enlargement/improvement of the Media Center. (1-2 yr. plan)**

**Strategic Objective:** Improve the Media Center to permit staff attorneys and other employees to receive job-related training as well as information regarding public safety and employee health on their own schedules.

**Strategic Outcome:** Use of enhanced media center will enable better access to online self-study training. Video training should enhance employee job performance and may reduce health and workers' compensation claims through proactive awareness and efforts.

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**4. Creation of Court of Appeals Conference Room (1-2 yr. plan)**

**Strategic Objective:** Conference room should be large enough to house 30-50 individuals. Conference room will allow the Court to hold internal meetings with staff as well as external parties. It will also provide an additional training area as needed.

**Strategic Outcome:** Enable Court to meet together more often to discuss issues and projects on a collaborative basis. More synergy, spirit of cooperation.

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**C. Uniform application of internal and state policies and procedures.**

*1. Development of new employee orientation manuals specific to each class of employee: judge (1-2 yr. plan), staff attorney (1-2 yr. plan), administrative assistant (1-2 yr. plan), clerk's staff (1-2 yr. plan)*

**Strategic Objective:** Facilitate training of new staff relative to court rules and procedures.

**Strategic Outcome:** Greater uniformity in the application of policies.

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**2. Development of employee intranet for access to personnel and internal policies and procedures (4 yr. plan)**

**Strategic Objective:** Improve employee access to internal (Court) and external (State) policies and procedures.

**Strategic Outcome:** Greater uniformity in the application of policies.

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**D. Development and implementation of Business Continuity Plan. (4 yr. plan)**

**Strategic Objective:** Identify and plan for business continuity in event of security/emergency conditions which would require work to be performed from remote or alternative locations.

**Strategic Outcome:** Ability to readily transition court work to remote or alternative locations with minimal disruption of services.

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**Goal**

2. Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of case processing by automation through use of technology.

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**A. More reliance on online legal research libraries. (4 yr. plan)**

**Strategic Objective:** Increased use of legal online services for legal research.

**Strategic Outcome:** Enhanced access to legal resources. Continued reduction of print resources and better utilization of space. Potential reduction in research costs.

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**B. Enhancement of Court Web Portal for both in-house and remote access to legal research materials, draft memorandums and opinions. (4 yr. plan)**

**Strategic Objective:** Greater flexibility for processing cases both in-house and remotely through tele-working (virtual office).

**Strategic Outcome:** Enhanced communication among judges and support staff.

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***C. Development of e-filing and electronic documents database. (4 yr. plan & LT plan)***

**Strategic Objective:** Receive case filings and pleadings from parties electronically. Send out notices, orders, and opinions from Court to parties electronically (4 yr. plan). Receive records and transcripts from trial courts (LT plan).

**Strategic Outcome:** Speed transmission of documents to/from Court. Potential long-term reduction of filing space for court records. Enhanced access to public information by unlimited and equal simultaneous access to court records. Potentially e-filing will expedite case processing in the Court.

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***Goal***

3. Improve access to public information.

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***A. Further education of the public on the history and purpose of the Court of Appeals. (1 yr. plan)***

**Strategic Objective:** Prepare a video on the history and purpose of the Court of Appeals and distribute to schools and other interested parties.

**Strategic Outcome:** Enhanced understanding of intent and purpose of our court.

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***B. Provide more information to the parties, general public, and media through web access. (4 yr-LT plan)***

**Strategic Objective:** Expansion of the court's web page to enable access not only to the court's docket, but copies of court orders and court records.

**Strategic Outcome:** Enhanced access to public records.

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***C. Educate public on how to appeal a case in Georgia. (4 yr. plan)***

**Strategic Objective:** Prepare an instructional video for pro se litigants on how to correctly appeal their cases.

**Strategic Outcome:** Enhanced understanding of public on appellate case procedures. Greater access to public for information on how to appeal cases. Reduction of mistakes by pro se litigants.

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***Goal***

4. Improved Opinion Writing.

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***A. Development of staff through in-house training. (1-2 yr. plan)***

**Strategic Objective:** Continue in-house training in cooperation with Atlanta Bar Association to provide more effective training relating to opinion writing.

**Strategic Outcome:** Enable staff to receive CLE training in a more efficient (time) and cost-effective manner. Training better relates to actual duties performed.

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***B. Reduce caseloads for judge/staff. (LT plan)***

**Strategic Objective:** Reduce caseload either through additional judgeships or additional staff attorneys.

**Strategic Outcome:** Reduction in cases handled per individual would allow greater emphasis to be on quality of work more than quantity.

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***Success Factors***

- Promised available of space in Health Building.
- Current tele-working activity and remote access.
- Current Media Center utilization.
- Current Court Web Page.
- Available historical information on Court of Appeals.

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## *Success Inhibitors*

- Time and funding for renovation of space.
- Continued growth of workload.
- Availability of trained staff attorneys relative to opinion writing.
- Limit of technical staff hours.
- Staff time demands.
- Cooperative efforts of trial courts to obtain electronic records. Time and money required.

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