



ATLANTA
PRIDE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025 - 2027

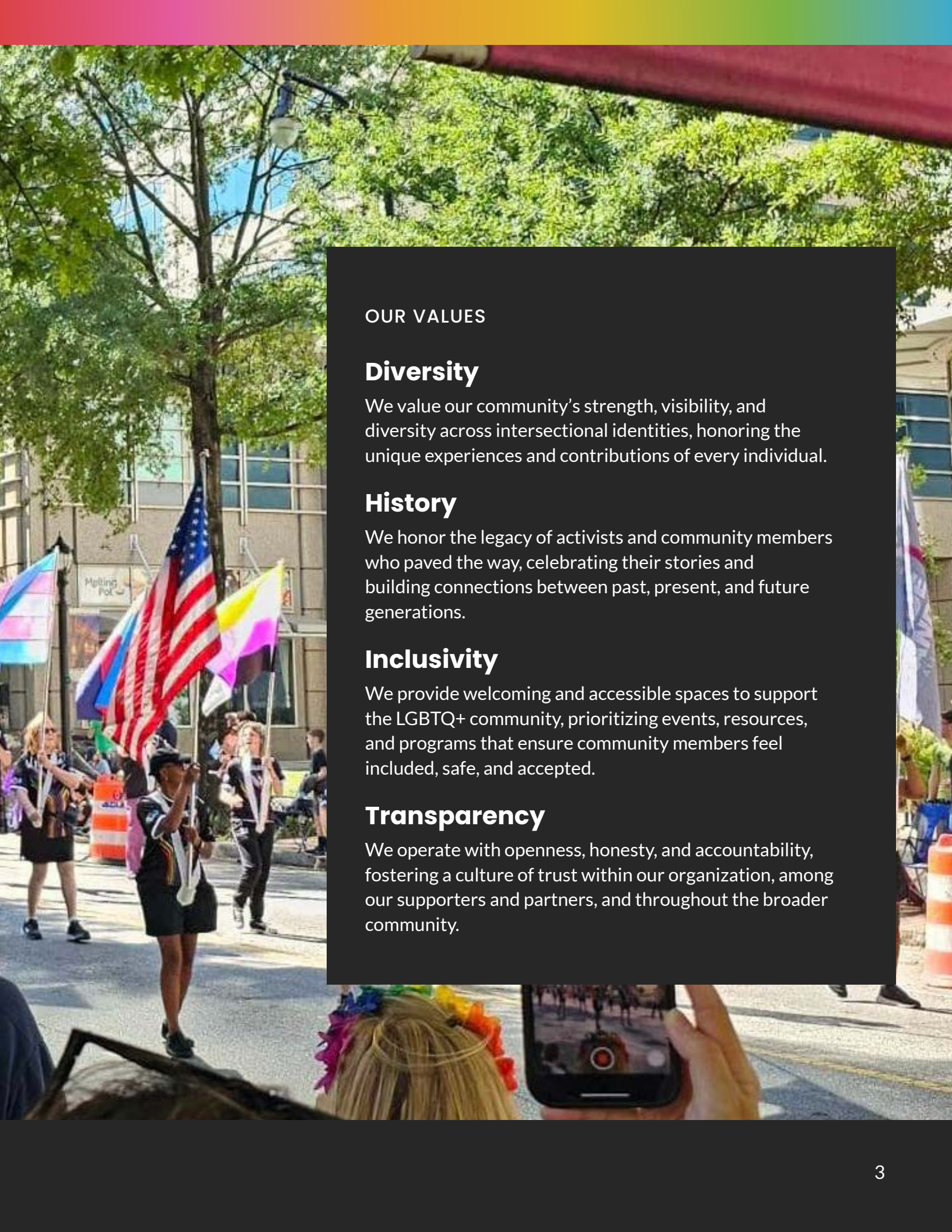


OUR MISSION

Atlanta Pride cultivates vibrant and inclusive community for LGBTQ+ people in the Southeast by amplifying diverse voices, fostering meaningful connections, and celebrating the rich cultural expressions that unite and uplift our community.

OUR VISION

Atlanta Pride envisions a thriving LGBTQ+ community where every identity is valued, our history is celebrated, and our diverse voices fuel an equitable, safe, and liberated future.



OUR VALUES

Diversity

We value our community's strength, visibility, and diversity across intersectional identities, honoring the unique experiences and contributions of every individual.

History

We honor the legacy of activists and community members who paved the way, celebrating their stories and building connections between past, present, and future generations.

Inclusivity

We provide welcoming and accessible spaces to support the LGBTQ+ community, prioritizing events, resources, and programs that ensure community members feel included, safe, and accepted.

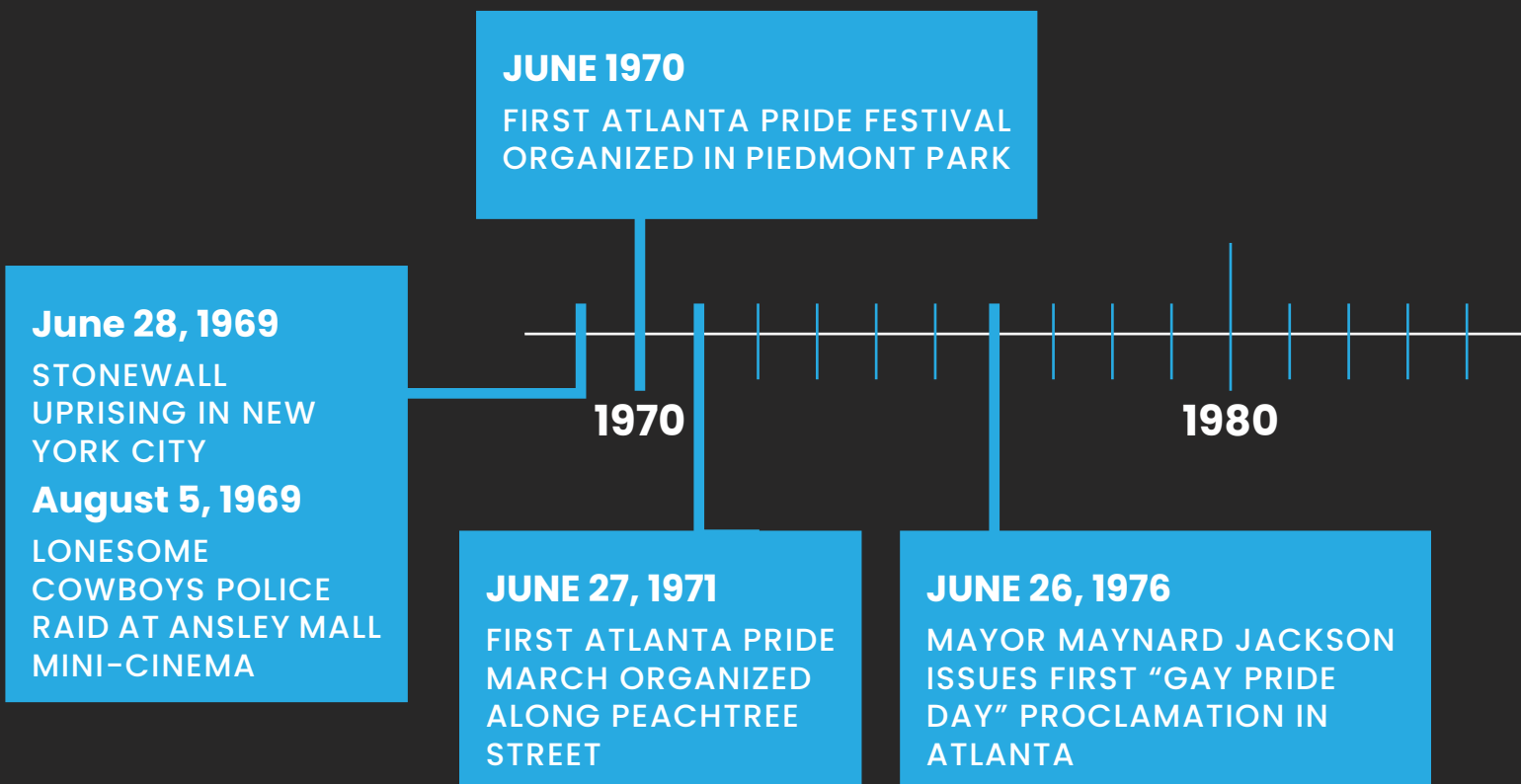
Transparency

We operate with openness, honesty, and accountability, fostering a culture of trust within our organization, among our supporters and partners, and throughout the broader community.

OUR STORY

Atlanta Pride is Georgia's oldest nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the LGBTQ+ community. For more than fifty years, it has advocated for and provided resources to gender and sexually diverse communities in metro Atlanta and across the Southeastern United States. Its work includes organizing the annual Atlanta Pride Festival and Parade in October, along with a variety of educational, social, and philanthropic programs throughout the year.

Tracing its roots to 1970, Atlanta Pride formed in response to the Lonesome Cowboys raid and was inspired by the national momentum following the Stonewall Uprising. Over the years, the Atlanta Pride Festival has become one of the nation's leading LGBTQ+ gatherings, promoting unity, visibility, and activism. The annual celebration, now held in October to align with National Coming Out Day, has expanded to include the city's largest annual parade, multiple community marches, concerts, and a wide range of community events, drawing hundreds of thousands of participants. Throughout its history, Atlanta Pride has remained committed to advancing LGBTQ+ rights and celebrating the community's diversity, continuously adapting to the times and making a significant impact both locally and nationally.





1990

2000

2010

JUNE 1990

ATLANTA PRIDE'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY DRAWS LARGEST CROWD TO DATE

OCTOBER 2010

ATLANTA PRIDE RESCHEDULED FROM JUNE TO OCTOBER TO ALIGN WITH NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY

OUR IMPACT



Since 1970 Atlanta Pride is the oldest organization in Georgia dedicated to serving the LGBTQ+ community



Atlanta's largest parade with over 100,000 spectators



The Southeast's largest annual LGBTQ+ gathering



In 2024, its "Pride Across the Peach State" grant initiative awarded \$50,000 to 13 Pride organizations in Georgia



The largest free Pride festival in the U.S. with over 350,000 attendees during the weekend



No other Pride organization is making grants to other local Prides at this scale



ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITITES



Community Connector

GOAL:

Enhance the role of Atlanta Pride as a connector of Atlanta's LGBTQ+ community.

Atlanta Pride serves as an essential connector of the LGBTQ+ community across the Southeast. It is a common entry point for newcomers to the community; however, this reach is often limited to the annual festival. To solidify its role as a hub for the community, Atlanta Pride will extend its engagement beyond this single event. This strategic plan focuses on building a year-round connection with the community through various initiatives. By creating a virtual resource hub, organizing and co-presenting events, and providing educational programs, Atlanta Pride can become a trusted source of information, fostering connections and driving participation in year-round activities in addition to the annual festival itself.



KEY STRATEGIES:

- Develop a virtual community resource hub with a directory of services, an LGBTQ+ events calendar, resource listings, and other relevant community information.
- Initiate projects to document and celebrate the history of Atlanta Pride and the Southeastern LGBTQ+ community, showcasing these stories throughout the year and at the annual festival.
- Formalize the internal process for initiating programs and partnerships based on the unique needs of Atlanta's diverse LGBTQ+ communities.
- Establish partnerships to offer support and share resources with LGBTQ+ Pride organizations throughout Georgia, fostering a statewide network of connected communities.

METRICS OF SUCCESS:

- Number of individuals and organizations engaged in the virtual community hub
- Increase in number of non-festival volunteers engaged and retained
- Increase in attendance at non-festival events organized by Atlanta Pride
- Attendance at and sustainability of events supported through grantmaking



Festival Resiliency

GOAL:

Bolster the role of the Atlanta Pride Festival as a sustainable, inclusive, and thriving celebration of the LGBTQ+ community.

The Atlanta Pride Festival is a signature LGBTQ+ event, but it needs to adapt to ensure its lasting impact. This plan focuses on continuing to emphasize the importance of the festival model as both sustainable and inclusive. By diversifying revenue, creating a detailed playbook, and building a strong volunteer system, Atlanta Pride will guarantee long-term success. Prioritizing diverse vendors, performers, and accessibility creates a festival that reflects the region's LGBTQ+ community. Open communication and responsible data capture will strengthen trust with attendees and partners. This elevates the Atlanta Pride Festival as a thriving, inclusive celebration for years to come.



KEY STRATEGIES:

- Conduct a comprehensive business model review to ensure sustainability for the future.
- Develop a festival playbook to ensure organizational resiliency and institutional knowledge transfer.
- Create a structured volunteer recruitment, onboarding, and retention process to cultivate new leadership and address institutional knowledge gaps.
- Prioritize participation and inclusion of diverse LGBTQ+-owned businesses, individuals, and organizations in all aspects of the festival to ensure a fully inclusive festival experience.
- Implement responsible attendee data strategy and comprehensive engagement initiatives to strengthen connections with Atlanta's LGBTQ+ community.

METRICS OF SUCCESS:

- Adapting the festival business model to increase sustainability and mitigate risks
- Increase in number of festival volunteers engaged and percentage retained
- Implementation of data system to capture and analyze feedback from attendees and supporters
- Increase in participation of diverse, LGBTQ+-owned performers and businesses participating in the festival



Organizational Sustainability

GOAL:

Secure long-term stability for Atlanta Pride through diversified revenue and strengthened infrastructure.

Atlanta Pride's long-term success requires a secure financial future and a solid organizational foundation. By diversifying revenue streams and bolstering its infrastructure, Atlanta Pride positions itself for long-term success. This multi-pronged approach fosters financial stability through individual giving programs, grants, and a monthly giving initiative, reducing reliance on festival sponsorships. Standardized procedures and a more diverse, skilled board will streamline operations and strengthen fundraising capabilities. Investing in staff will empower Atlanta Pride to manage growth, develop new programs, and ultimately expand its reach and impact within the Atlanta LGBTQ+ community.



KEY STRATEGIES:

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for diversified contributed income to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Establish new funding sources to support programmatic initiatives to serve the community year-round.
- Ensure diversity and representation throughout the organization that reflects the communities served.
- Identify needs and align staff capacity to support long-term growth.
- Strengthen volunteer leadership structure.

METRICS OF SUCCESS:

- Increase in percentage of non-festival revenue
- Increase in number of individual, monthly, and major donors
- Increase in diversity and representation throughout staff, board, and volunteers
- Growth and development of staff in alignment with organizational priorities

LEARNINGS FROM THE COMMUNITY

Purpose Possible worked with Atlanta Pride to develop a strategic plan utilizing multiple methods. We first engaged with festival participants, partner organizations, philanthropic partners, and the broader community Atlanta Pride serves through a community input process. Additionally, we conducted an environmental scan by surveying different national and international Pride nonprofit organizations to better understand Atlanta Pride's role within the sector.

Atlanta Pride has a dual function, acting as a celebration and LGBTQ+ connection point, emphasizing the importance of community-driven engagement, intersectional representation, and ongoing organizational evolution. However, we also found the feedback and research underscored a desire for deeper community bonds, year-round impact, and strategic partnerships to further enhance Atlanta Pride's visibility and engagement opportunities.

Overall, the community engagement and environment scan highlighted Atlanta Pride's profound historical impact within the LGBTQ+ movement and emphasized the organization as a space for community celebration, inclusivity, and connection. The following trends and key takeaways were the result of this research project and point to several organizational distinctives and opportunities for Atlanta Pride to consider.



DISTINCTIVES

Atlanta Pride holds a unique position defined by several key distinctives that shape its identity and impact, driving meaningful work within the LGBTQ+ community.



These include:

- **Community Engagement and Togetherness:** Atlanta Pride is celebrated as a vital community organization that fosters connections and a sense of belonging among diverse LGBTQ+ groups, offering a platform for celebration, visibility, and unconditional acceptance. It is recognized for its historical significance, impact, year-round engagement, community focus, and organizational dynamics.
- **Inclusivity and Intersectionality:** Atlanta Pride stands out for its commitment to inclusivity, showcasing diverse identities and engaging marginalized groups within the LGBTQ+ community. However, there are calls for greater representation and awareness around issues of race and intersectionality.
- **Organizational Evolution and Perception:** Atlanta Pride stands out as a well-regarded entity at a national level. Views on Atlanta Pride's evolution reflect contrasting sentiments at the community level, with some expressing nostalgia for grassroots origins and others acknowledging its impact as a larger, more visible event. There is a desire for deeper community partnerships and year-round programming.
- **Free Festival:** Many organizations ticket a variety of their events during their festival. Along with a few others, Atlanta Pride features a widely recognized and heavily attended free festival that offers diverse events catering to the community, along with several marches and a parade recognized for its size and number of yearly participants.
- **Community Grant Program:** Only a few organizations have similar programs for giving back to organizations doing meaningful work year-round. An essential aspect of Atlanta Pride's year-round work is its grant program, which is prominently featured on the organization's website. Through this program, Atlanta Pride is amplifying its impact and fostering collaboration within the LGBTQ+ community.



OPPORTUNITIES

Atlanta Pride can incorporate specific strategies into its structure to remain competitive and relevant compared to other organizations in the sector, both regionally and nationally. By staying abreast of trends identified in the report, Atlanta Pride can ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness nationally. These strategies may include:

- **Historical Timeline:** Developing a section on Atlanta Pride’s website to showcase the history of Atlanta’s LGBTQ+ community. Being a space and home for this type of preservation will not only enhance Atlanta Pride’s communication and marketing, but it will also raise awareness and build community connection. Leveraging partners in the area is also a way to incorporate others into this work, a collective effort of preservation.
- **Committee Intersectionality & Diversity:** Acknowledging that a single Pride organization cannot encompass the entire LGBTQ+ community is common in other organizations in this research. There are different approaches, but overall, visibility and recognition of this intersectionality are key. Whether through committees (like Amsterdam Pride) or a community resource page (like Twin Cities Pride), it is important to acknowledge these intersecting identities and show support and partnership with them and their work.
- **Clear Communication on Programming:** Atlanta Pride maintains an active and up-to-date online presence - including social media platforms with significant followership - where it promotes events and showcases other happenings in the city. However, having clear communication about what Atlanta Pride does outside of the Festival weekend would be valuable. Whether through focus areas, pillars, or another form of distinction, Atlanta Pride’s website and social media should continuously describe and reiterate to its diverse audiences what the organization does outside of the Festival.



Methodology

Atlanta Pride began working on a strategic plan with Purpose Possible in January 2024. The Strategic Planning Committee helped us identify questions to ask, interested parties to survey, and ensured we stayed true to Atlanta Pride. We spent March and April gathering interested party feedback through one-on-one interviews, surveys, and a community input listening session. Overall, we received completed survey responses from 208 members of the community and conducted seven interviews. From there, we held a retreat with the full Board of Directors and staff. The Strategic Planning Committee worked to review the community input, environmental scan data, and discussions from both staff and the Board of Directors to develop consensus on the organizational direction for the next three years.

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Crystal Bowman

Brian Desarro

Forrest Evans

Elizabeth Fennell

Earl Fields

Bentley Hudgins

Gabriel Martinez

Dewayne Queen

Toby Vargas-Jaume

Nicoal Whitworth

ATLANTA PRIDE STAFF:

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