



BUREAU OF GOVERNMENTAL RESEARCH

2024-26 Strategic Plan



Focusing on the Future

Strategic planning provided an essential opportunity for self-reflection at the Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR). It allowed us to step back from our daily work of researching public policy and monitoring government in the New Orleans area to consider longer-term goals and how to achieve them.

This new strategic plan for 2024 to 2026 reaffirmed BGR's mission as an independent, nonprofit organization that supports informed public policy making and the effective use of public resources in our area. The plan complements this mission with statements of our vision, role, and values.

We have three main goals: to maintain our commitment to research excellence while expanding our reach; to enhance our community impact for the public's benefit; and to grow and diversify funding to sustain and expand our work.

The new strategic plan was built on the foundation that BGR's Board of Directors laid with our last strategic plan, adopted in 2018. That plan provided direction for growing our base of dues-paying members, developing our communications efforts, coordinating support for implementing our research recommendations, and seeking diverse perspectives to enrich our work.

To devise the new plan, our board discussed BGR's progress in each area of the 2018 strategic plan and explored what work remained. Meanwhile, staff held parallel meetings on the same topics. The board and staff collaborated to inform further discussion. BGR staff also completed the Greater New Orleans Foundation's organizational strategy exercise to clarify our thinking. BGR staff then drafted this new, three-year strategic plan for adoption by the board.

We believe our new plan will sustain BGR as an "honest broker" for citizens and policymakers working toward better government in our area. BGR is unique because we conduct our public policy work without special interests or ideological agendas. Instead, we look for the best solutions to problems facing our parishes, cities, and other governmental bodies at the forefront of improving the quality of life in the New Orleans area. BGR will remain a voice for holding government officials accountable for what they do and for employing the resources of the community in a fair, efficient, and effective way. We believe that the challenges of our metro area can be met, especially when citizens come together around solutions grounded in data and best practices.

BGR's Mission, Vision, and Role

OUR MISSION

The Bureau of Governmental Research is a private, nonprofit, independent research organization dedicated to informed public policy making and the effective use of public resources for the improvement of government in the New Orleans metropolitan area.

OUR VISION

BGR will remain a trusted information resource for better government in the New Orleans area, serving citizens, policymakers, community groups and the news media.

OUR ROLE

We will achieve our vision by:

- Continuously improving our research and monitoring of public entities in pursuit of greater government performance and accountability.
- Helping public officials and voters make policy decisions that promote sound stewardship of public resources, position government to better address the region's critical challenges, and create effective, sustainable outcomes for the whole community.

To this end, BGR raises public expectations for government to be:

CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING	DATA-DRIVEN	STRATEGIC	FORWARD-THINKING
METHODICAL	EFFICIENT	EFFECTIVE	INNOVATIVE
FAIR AND ACCESSIBLE	TRANSPARENT	ACCOUNTABLE	HONEST AND ETHICAL
RESPONSIVE	INCLUSIVE	RESULTS-ORIENTED	FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE

Our Values

BGR has always been about independence, accountability, and best practices, and we have always worked on behalf of everyone in the greater New Orleans area. We are increasingly focused on making our work more accessible, championing our findings, and working tirelessly toward implementation.

BGR is:

INDEPENDENT

We safeguard the integrity and credibility of our research.

ACCURATE

We deliver rigorous, objective and data-driven research.

RESULTS-FOCUSED

We develop effective solutions to complex challenges.

PERSISTENT

We catalyze significant improvement in government, which requires ongoing commitment, sometimes over many years.

ACCESSIBLE

We make our work clear and readily available to empower citizens and communities.

INCLUSIVE

We believe all people have intrinsic value, bring perspective to our work, and deserve fair government policies and services.

RESPONSIBLE

We are careful stewards to maintain BGR for the benefit of the community we serve.

Our Goals for the Next Three Years

BGR will pursue three foundational goals to flourish and serve the public. These goals continue core concepts from our 2018 plan relative to expanding communications, building support for our recommendations, seeking diverse perspectives, and measuring success.

Focusing on these goals will fuel a virtuous cycle of growth and achievement. We will increase the impact of our work by maintaining our commitment to research excellence while reaching more citizens and policymakers. Growth in those areas will raise BGR's profile and potential for results. It will also attract additional financial support to enhance our work further.



In the following sections, BGR presents each goal with specific objectives and key actions. During the next three years, we will work diligently toward these goals. We will report our results regularly to our board. BGR will also create and manage internal plans to support each objective and to measure progress.

Maintaining Research Excellence and Expanding Our Reach

BGR's independent, nonpartisan research and monitoring public entities are the primary ways in which we catalyze improvements in local government. The absence of a political agenda is central to BGR's work, enabling citizens to trust that BGR is working first and foremost on their behalf.

BGR has a tradition of research excellence, garnering many national awards. We are committed to continuously improving our research process. In a world of distraction and information overload, BGR recognizes that it must make sure citizens and policymakers understand our report findings and recommendations so they can put them into action. Clearly communicating research findings is an essential part of creating excellent research. For 2024 to 2026, we will pursue these objectives to maintain our commitment to research excellence while expanding our reach:

Objective 1. Ensure BGR's research products and related communications are approachable for citizens and demonstrate rigorous analysis that validates our findings for public policy practitioners.

Objective 2. Pursue more opportunities to encourage policymaker implementation of our recommendations and bring attention to public policy issues that BGR identifies in its regular monitoring of government entities.

Objective 3. Increase fields of expertise covered by the BGR research team to embrace new types of research, analytical approaches, and ways of presenting information to ensure we can tackle the research projects our community needs.

As BGR makes progress in these areas, we will see these outcomes:

- A broader range of citizens and policymakers engaging with and advocating for our work.
- More BGR interventions into public policy discussions tied to current events.
- New work products that follow up BGR's ballot reports and help citizens track core public functions, services, and finances.
- New solutions to make government function better for citizens in the New Orleans area.

Enhancing Our Community Impact for the Public's Benefit

BGR strives to have our policy recommendations implemented by government agencies whenever possible. But implementation takes persistence. Progress often comes in small steps, and in many cases, implementation will extend beyond the horizon of this strategic plan. This is because political conditions for changing the complex structural and fiscal issues that BGR tackles don't always align immediately.

To help bring about changes that benefit the public, BGR will seek to broaden our communications and community and policymaker outreach. We will pursue these objectives toward greater community impact in 2024 to 2026:

Objective 1. Optimize conditions for implementing report recommendations and support policymakers and civic groups pursuing them.

Objective 2. Regularly communicate the results of our work and our impact on governmental effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

Objective 3. Build BGR's internal capacity to coordinate communications and outreach.

Objective 4. Strengthen BGR's brand and visibility as a trusted resource for better government in the New Orleans area.

As BGR succeeds in these areas, we will see outcomes such as:

- Increased implementation of BGR report recommendations.
- Greater engagement with BGR reports and events by new audiences, including through social media.
- More regular communication with the public and policymakers about BGR, our work, and our events.
- An increased public presence for BGR.

Growing and Diversifying Our Funding to Sustain and Expand Our Work

Financial strength is paramount for maintaining BGR's independence. Membership in BGR is open to all, and the financial support of our members is essential for allowing us to do what we do as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. BGR is grateful to the many individuals, businesses, and foundations that support our mission. Members also help BGR by serving as ambassadors who share our work and lobby for the adoption of our recommendations to increase our impact.

In the next three years, we will build our membership base and other avenues of financial support. In addition, BGR will intensify our donor stewardship efforts to build and strengthen long-term relationships. BGR has developed several objectives to grow and diversify our funding:

Objective 1. Average at least 10% annual net growth in the amount of funds raised from foundations and other sponsors.

Objective 2. Improve annual retention rates for current and first-year members, build loyalty, increase engagement, and increase donations.

Objective 3. Average at least 5% annual net growth in BGR's membership base. In addition, achieve growth among those under 40, Jefferson Parish residents, and historically underrepresented groups.

Objective 4. Develop key fundraising policies recommended by the Association for Fundraising Professionals (AFP).

As BGR succeeds in these areas, we will see these outcomes:

- Increased financial independence, resiliency, and capacity.
- Increased retention of loyal BGR members who also serve as engaged and energized BGR ambassadors ready to advocate for our work.
- A broader membership base that better reflects the communities we serve.
- Safeguards to ensure ethical and sustainable donor relationships that reflect BGR's commitment to best practices and present BGR as a worthy recipient of their generosity.

Our Gratitude

BGR is grateful to our board's strategic planning committee co-chairs Anne Baños and Merritt Lane, who led this effort with thoughtfulness and dedication.

BGR also thanks committee members Ryan Adkerson, Christine Albert, Elizabeth Boh, Melanie Bronfin, Carlin Conner, Ben Dupuy, Norma Grace, John Landrum, David Rieveschl, Jen Roberts, Steve Usdin, and Charles West for their wise perspectives, questions, suggestions and encouragement.

Current and former BGR staff members Rebecca Mowbray, Stephen Stuart, Emily Remington, Paul Rioux, Jamie Parker, Susie Dudis, Marci Schramm, and Selva Riemann also worked to create this plan.

Adopted by the BGR Board of Directors

MARCH 27, 2024

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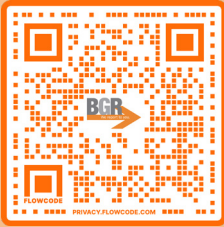
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To preserve its independence, BGR relies on financial support from a diverse membership of individuals, corporations and foundations. To find out how you can support our work, go to <https://www.bgr.org/membership> or call us at 504-525-1734.

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