

SARA J. TONCHI

Atlanta, Georgia | sara@lunoorconsulting.com

Transformational Leader and Social Justice Advocate

Engaging and visionary leader with a national reputation for advancing organizational impact and effectiveness. Brings 25+ years of experience in the nonprofit and social justice sectors, with a lifelong passion for helping leaders and organizations achieve their highest potential. Known for an open mind, tenacious spirit, and a collaborative style. Expert at guiding organizations through growth, change, and transformation with clarity, resilience, and purpose.

Team Building & Facilitation | Executive Coaching | Strategic Planning | Fundraising & Philanthropy
Board Development & Governance | Partnerships with Unlikely Allies | Public Policy | Research | Problem Solver
Public Speaking | Change Management | Communications | Racial Justice | Finance & Budgeting

AWARDS AND HIGHLIGHTS

2019-2022	"500: Our City's Most Powerful Leaders," Atlanta Magazine
2018	"Commitment to Equality Award," State Bar of Georgia's Committee to Promote Inclusion
2012-2018	"Notable Georgian," Georgia Trend
2015	"Top Ten New Guard of Atlanta," Atlanta Magazine
2014-2015	"Top 100 Influential Georgia Women," Georgia Informer
2012	"40 Under 40," Atlanta Business Chronicle
2012	Leadership Atlanta Class of 2012, The oldest sustained community leadership program in the US.
2011	"Five of the Future," Atlanta Magazine
2010	"40 Under 40," Georgia Trend

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

FOUNDING PARTNER | LUNOOR CONSULTING & SARA TONCHI, LLC

Jan 2022 – present

Independent consultant for nonprofit organizational strategy, development, and leadership. Provides bespoke services to a portfolio of racial and social justice leaders and organizations. Specializing in organizational, board, and leadership development; transition navigation support; strategic planning; and political and public policy advocacy. Some projects/clients have included:

- **Justice Fund of Georgia, Grantmakers for Southern Progress & Public Welfare Foundation:** The Justice Fund of Georgia was founded in 2024 to connect local and national philanthropy to advance transformative youth and adult justice reform and collaborate and invest in unprecedented ways to build a new and better Georgia. [Read my report.](#)
- **Organizational Development Consultant:** Supporting nonprofits and social justice organizations—especially grassroots groups and those serving vulnerable communities—strengthen strategy, leadership, culture, and organizational structures. Clients in 2025-26 include Georgia Youth Justice Coalition, Feminist Center for Reproductive Liberation, Georgians for College Affordability, Asian American Advocacy Fund, New Disabled South, Georgia Budget & Policy Institute, Women on the Rise, Motherhood Beyond Bars, and more.
- **Executive Coach:** Provides hands on support and leadership and strategic coaching to executive directors and senior organizational leaders in social justice organizations working for climate justice, justice reform, and to advance leadership of justice-impacted people.
- **Faculty:** Nonprofit University at the Georgia Center for Nonprofits, training nonprofit leaders on leadership and management excellence, to equip them with the skills and strategies to guide their organizations with clarity, resilience, and impact.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | Southern Center for Human Rights (SCHR)

Jan 2010 – Dec 2021

The Southern Center for Human Rights works for equality, dignity, and justice for people impacted by the criminal legal system in the Deep South. SCHR fights for a world free from mass incarceration, the death penalty, the criminalization of poverty, & racial injustice.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADER: Transformed the 45-year-old organization into a highly reputed, mission-driven non-profit, setting the bar for excellence as the first non-lawyer to head the firm. Built a local, regional, and national network of top legal professionals, corporate executives, elected officials, community leaders, and donors aligned with mission and vision.

STRATEGIC CHANGEMAKER: Impacted the entire non-profit ecosystem in the Atlanta area. Identified critical human rights challenges and opportunities to grow SCHR's influence dramatically, while expanding the scope of legal and social services available to clients. Served as a key spokesperson to the media and policymakers.

PROGRAM DRIVER: Led efforts with executive team, board of directors, donors, and community stakeholders to drive alignment, scalability, and deliverables. Partnered with local and national organizations to help influence policies and provide case-specific information. Testified on public policies to elected officials at local, state, and federal levels.

TEAMBUILDER: Recruited and developed top talent and built a culture of long-term retention, while sustainably doubling staff from 20 to 45+. Oversaw staff performance, collaboration, training, and alignment with organizational values and racial justice.

SKILLFUL FUNDRAISER: Grew budget from \$2M to \$6M+, breaking fundraising goals year-over-year for 11 straight years. Earned a "4-Star Charity Navigator" rating for nine consecutive years (less than 5% of nonprofits get eight or more 5-star ratings). Built partnerships with foundations, Fortune 500 corporations, and large private law firms to help drive awareness and donations.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPER: Secured multi-year funding to establish SCHR's first sub-granting program to key coalition partners. Cultivated community involvement and donations with influential presentations. Drove organizational awareness to secure pro bono partnerships. Promoted community leadership and engagement within SCHR's team.

INDUSTRY INNOVATOR: Trained and lectured on local and national platforms on criminal legal reform priorities, the death penalty, mass incarceration, the criminalization of poverty, and the intersections of race, poverty, and justice.

LARGE-SCALE PROJECT MANAGEMENT: Led the planning, management, and negotiations for a \$4.2M commercial real estate purchase and a \$2M sale. Developed and directed execution of SCHR's 5-year strategic plan.

PUBLIC POLICY DIRECTOR | SOUTHERN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

May 2001 – Dec 2009

SCHR's inaugural Public Policy Director. Represented SCHR at the Georgia General Assembly on a full range of criminal justice and public safety initiatives. Developed and executed a multi-faceted strategy (including litigation, coalition-building, communications, legislative advocacy) that culminated in the passage of the *2003 Georgia Indigent Defense Act*, which created a statewide public defender system for the first time in Georgia. Built the organization's credibility as a national leader and innovator in public policy. Served as SCHR's spokesperson for cases and campaigns, including class actions, death penalty litigation, the criminalization of poverty, and race discrimination. Directed legislative advocacy, communications, coalition engagement, and outreach to unlikely allies including survivors of crime, law enforcement, prosecutors, and conservatives.

SELECT LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Inaugural President of Advisory Board , Motherhood Beyond Bars (Georgia)	2024 to Present
Advisory Board Member , Institute to End Mass Incarceration at Harvard Law School	2021 to Present
President of the Board of Directors , The Promise of Justice Initiative (Louisiana)	2019 to 2026
Secretary and Founding Board Member , Parkside Foundation (Local)	2024 to 2026
Vice Chair , Parkside Elementary School PTA (Local)	2023 to 2025
Member , Square One Collaborative on Reckoning and Justice (National)	2023 to 2025
Commissioner , US Senators Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff's Federal Nominations Advisory Commission	2021 to 2025
Member , GO Team at Parkside Elementary School (Local elected position)	2021 to 2023
Board Member , Motherhood Beyond Bars (Georgia)	2018 to 2023
Vice Chair of the Board of Directors , re:power (National)	2018 to 2022
Advisory Board , American Constitution Society, Georgia Lawyer's Chapter (Georgia)	2010 to 2021
Advisory Council , National Institute for Trial Advocacy (National)	2017 to 2019
Chairperson , Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (Georgia)	2008 to 2010
Steering Committee , Arab Women's Solidarity Association (International)	2000 to 2010

SELECT PUBLICATIONS AND PODCAST APPEARANCES

The High Crime of Being Poor in the Deep South , <i>The Women Podcast</i>	2021
The Criminalization of Poverty , <i>Justice in America Podcast Episode 12</i>	2019
Opinion: Disenfranchising [People with Felony Convictions] Hurts Georgians , <i>Atlanta Journal Constitution</i>	2019
Criminal justice reform in Georgia cannot end with Governor Deal , <i>Atlanta Magazine</i>	2018
Why Georgia's most important decision on Election Day isn't Trump or Clinton , <i>Atlanta Magazine</i>	2016
Five Things Wrong with Georgia's Death Penalty , <i>The Marshall Project</i>	2015

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Bachelor of Science in Family and Community Services and Women's Studies | BERRY COLLEGE, Rome, GA
Strengthening Democracy Fellow, 2017 | ROCKWOOD LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE