



2019 Policy and Advocacy Agenda

Georgia Advancing Communities Together (Georgia ACT) is a statewide membership organization, which represents the state's nonprofit housing and community development organizations. Our mission is to build and support a statewide network of thriving member organizations and trained professionals engaged in housing and community development serving families with limited housing choices. We advocate for a more favorable policy environment for the nonprofit housing industry. We represent the nonprofit housing and community development industry to state and federal government (both executive and legislative branches), stakeholders, and other organizations targeting a similar population. Georgia ACT seeks greater resources to support the nonprofit industry and provides forums where nonprofit organizations can network, exchange information through peer learning and recognize member contributions. In addition, we provide communications tools to inform members of upcoming activities and promote nonprofit housing and community development issues, act as an informational resource for the public on the activities of the nonprofit housing and community development industry, and commission research regarding the affordable housing and community development industry.

Georgia law provides a commitment to safe, decent, affordable housing for all. Georgia Advancing Communities Georgia ACT is dedicated to engaging a broad coalition of organizations and individuals to make that vision a reality that creates stronger, healthier, better educated and more successful communities.

Housing is the bedrock for strong families and vibrant communities. Today, one out of every five Georgia families is paying over 50% of their income for housing – a challenge that is unaffordable and results in housing that is insecure, uninhabitable or nonexistent. Georgia ACT's Policy and Advocacy Agenda supports strengthening resources and commitments to meet the affordable housing needs for all sectors and income levels, including rural, underserved, and vulnerable populations of seniors, children, and people with disabilities.

Georgia ACT's Policy Priorities:

Increase Resources and Opportunities to Provide Housing for All

- **Healthy Housing protection against eviction for complaints to code enforcement regarding children and vulnerable adults sickened and endangered by unhealthy, unsafe rental housing.**
- **Address "contract for deed" predatory lending practices that deceive "buyers" into false purchases that confer all the obligations of home ownership and none of the protections.**
- **Support blight amelioration grants for volunteer neighborhood clean-up efforts.**
- **Support \$2.5 Million for supportive housing for 700 homeless people with severe and persistent mental illness now cycling through hospitals, emergency rooms, prisons and jails.**
- **Support a Constitutional amendment for dedication of general revenue to specific purposes by general law and without a statewide referendum. ([HR 164](#))**

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Local Legislative Priorities:

- **City of Atlanta:**
 - Authorize owners of Community Land Trust homes to receive the same homestead exemptions as other homeowners.
 - Allow local governments to waive development impact fees for projects that provide affordable housing without requiring replenishment from sources other than the development impact fee fund.
- **Cordele/Crisp County:** Establish a Land Bank Authority.

Additional Goals:

- **Empower cities and counties to establish Local Housing Trust Funds with more options for dedicated revenue streams** to fund their specific affordable housing needs.
- **Protect the State Low Income Housing Tax Credit** as a significant and continuing source of funding for new affordable multi-family housing statewide.
- **Maximize Georgia's access to federal funding that supports affordable housing.**
- **Increase resources to the Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless** to establish added permanent housing options so that homelessness is temporary and rare.
- **Enable local communities to use zoning, tax and financial incentives** to support preservation and development of housing that meets the needs of families across the economic spectrum.
- **Allow communities to extend public subsidies to achieve long-term housing affordability.**
- **Strengthen connections between housing, good jobs, quality schools and transit options.**
- **Support community development in rural communities by increasing access to broadband, public transit, disaster relief for homeowners and renters in the wake of Hurricanes Michael and Florence, and other natural disasters.**
- **Establish a Housing Affordability Task Force to prioritize solutions for low cost housing.**
- **Prohibit "Source of Income" Discrimination** for renters receiving public housing subsidies.

Georgia ACT's Policy Action Strategies:

- **Housing Day at the Capitol on February 27, 2019** – Advocacy Training and Engagement from 7:30am to 2:00pm. Register at <https://georgiaact.org/advocacy/housingday2019/>
- **Messaging and Advocacy Training Webinar** – February 19, 2019 at 12:30 p.m.
- **Advocacy updates and alerts** throughout the legislative session to empower statewide engagement with legislators on affordable housing priorities.
- **Engage Department of Community Affairs** to increase access to affordable housing through:
 - Enforcement of annual state housing goals and legislative reporting requirements.
 - Increase State Plan commitments for housing low-income families.
- **Expand the coalition** of organizations working together to increase access to safe, decent, affordable housing for all Georgians.
- **Expand public education on affordable housing to raise awareness.**
- **Obtain input from organizations, municipalities, practitioners, and advocates** throughout the state of Georgia on affordable housing issues to build a 2020 legislative agenda.