



**Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism's
Unified State Service Plan
2020-2024**

Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism

Mission

The Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism (GCSV, Commission) is a catalyst to address critical needs in Georgia by working with AmeriCorps and community partners.

- We create and promote opportunities for Georgians to serve.
- We support organizations that use volunteer service to solve Georgia's community problems.
- We make sure the investment in volunteer service is protected and managed well.

Working within the Department of Community Affairs, the Commission has provided more than \$80 million in AmeriCorps funds to Georgia's communities since 1994. Over this time, tens of thousands of Georgians have served in AmeriCorps.

GCSV's State Service Plan

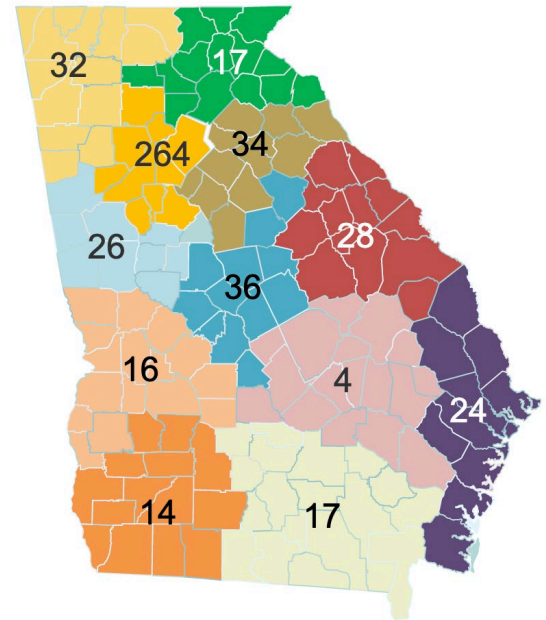
Georgians from all walks of life have a great deal in common, especially their love of the Peach State. From our rural areas to our cities, Georgians express a commitment to faith, freedom and excellence. Georgians are warm, caring people, and they give of their time and talent to support their neighbors and to make Georgia a great place to live.

The Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism presents this State Service Plan for 2020-2024, to deploy service and volunteerism as a strategy to solve local problems. The quality of this plan is predicated upon receiving input from a cross section of all Georgians. With extensive outreach, the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism gathered citizen feedback from every region of the state. We conducted a citizen survey and received 532 responses (next page). The results reflect the strength of Georgia's communities and the many ways Georgians contribute.

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Survey Results

- Georgians volunteer in large numbers. When asked, “What do you do to make a difference, volunteer, serve others or contribute to your community, **70%** of respondents offered detailed examples. In fact, only *eleven percent* checked the option, “I don’t volunteer.”
- Citizens support of GCSV’s mission. **92%** agree with this statement: “**I support the work of the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism to engage AmeriCorps members and volunteers to solve local, state and national problems.**”
- Georgians want to do more.** In fact, the average Georgian is much more likely to serve with *two or more organizations* (64%) than not to volunteer at all (11%). The data and opinions shared show that Georgians seek even greater involvement in local problem solving. One resident reports, “I enjoy doing anything I can to volunteer with the elderly, children and first responders in Douglas and Carroll counties. If everyone would put time and effort into positive, supportive actions, it would be amazing what we could accomplish.”
- Volunteer rates are consistent across regions, and community size. On average, **Georgians volunteer in 2.25 settings**. One Bibb County respondent shows how people serve across the community. “I volunteer in kitchens that feed people who are homeless or impoverished. I teach children religious education, assist with neighborhood clean-ups, participate in the United Way Day of Caring and help out at my children’s school.”

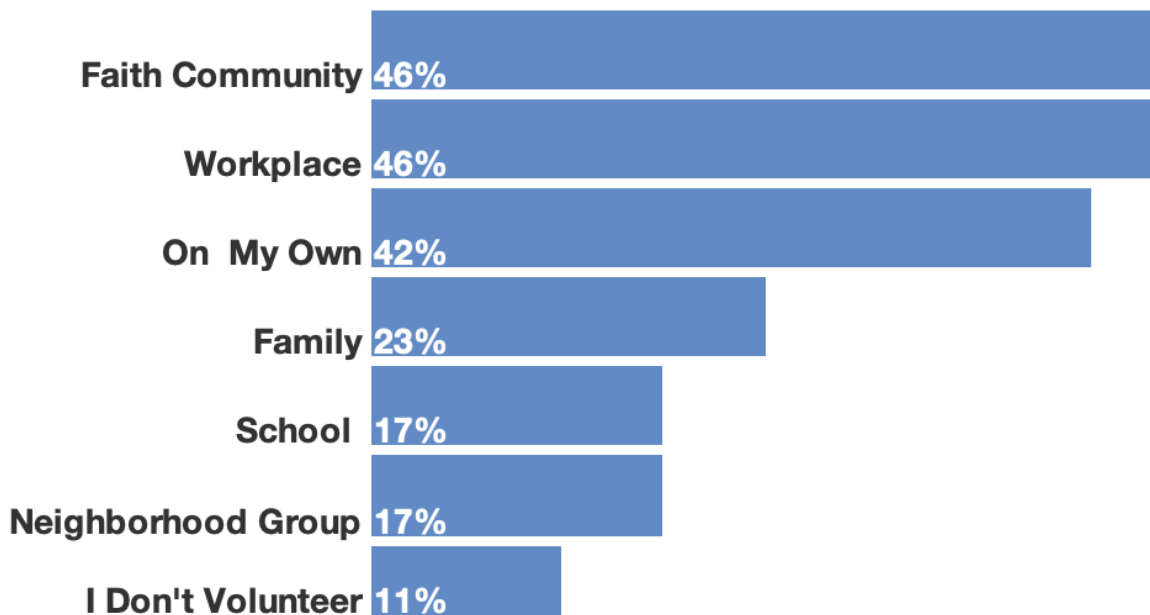


Citizens were shown this map and asked, “Which region do you live in?” Numbers indicate the responses for each region.

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Survey Results (continued)

Georgians volunteer for many reasons and in many settings:



Georgians understand that they have a voice in solving problems and they are the boots on the ground that get things done. People aren't waiting for organizations to tell them what they need. One Fulton County volunteer reports, "I volunteer with agencies across my community; buying toys at the holidays, mentoring youth through 100 Black Men... if it is to be, it is up to me."

Georgia is defined by a culture of neighbors helping neighbors.

Volunteerism is not just something Georgians *do*; it is who we *are*.

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Values

Volunteer service changes lives—the lives of those who serve, and those who are served. In all that we do, GCSV is committed to engaging people across the state to conduct research that will enable them in developing solutions to solve their most pressing local issues. These values guide all that we do.

Equity

We administer and oversee the AmeriCorps programs and bring together a diverse representation of citizens and organizations across the state to increase civic engagement and meet community needs.

Impact

We are committed to achieving the highest possible impact with our resources and ensuring effective management and full compliance for our AmeriCorps programs.

Efficiency

We are committed to achieving the most good with the funds granted us by the taxpayers and donors of this nation, and we strive to operate with utmost transparency, clarity and efficiency.

Investment

We are committed to working with others to achieve a stronger Georgia, investing in partnerships with faith-based programs, corporations, school leaders and other local stakeholders to support volunteers to improve the quality of life for all of us.

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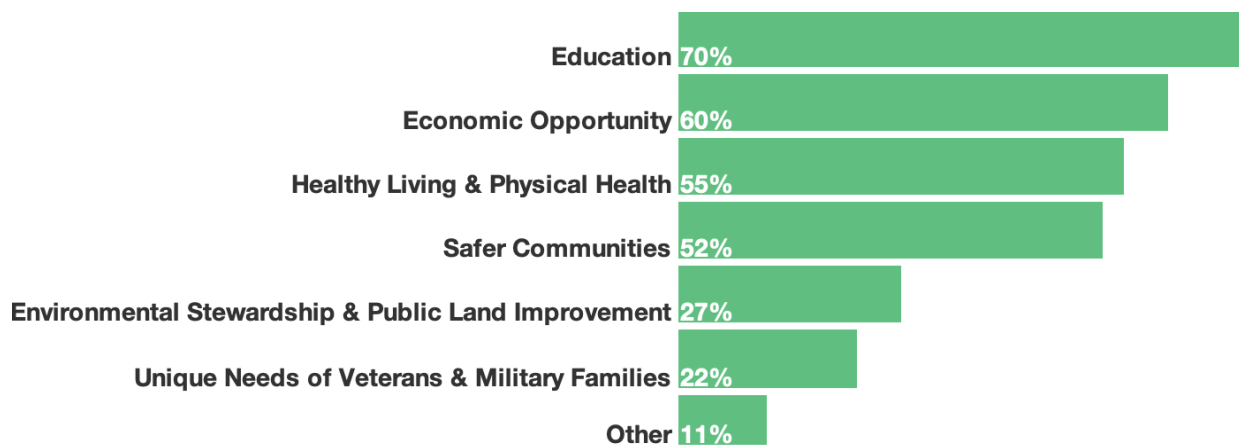
What matters to Georgians

In addition to asking about volunteer habits, GCSV surveyed citizens to learn what problems they want to solve. Survey participants shared their priorities for the strategic deployment of volunteer resources. Investigators asked three levels of questions:

- If you could solve one problem in your city, town or neighborhood, what would it be? *409 responses*
- Of GCSV's focus areas, which are most important to you? *488 responses*
- Choose up to three issues (under the focus areas). *899 responses*

Statewide, the priorities Georgians report are in line with Georgia's portfolio of funded AmeriCorps programs. Here are the responses to the question, "Of these six focus areas, which are most important to you? (Choose up to three.)" Nearly 500 people responded, with 2.9 choices on average.

Georgians' Priorities listed by category

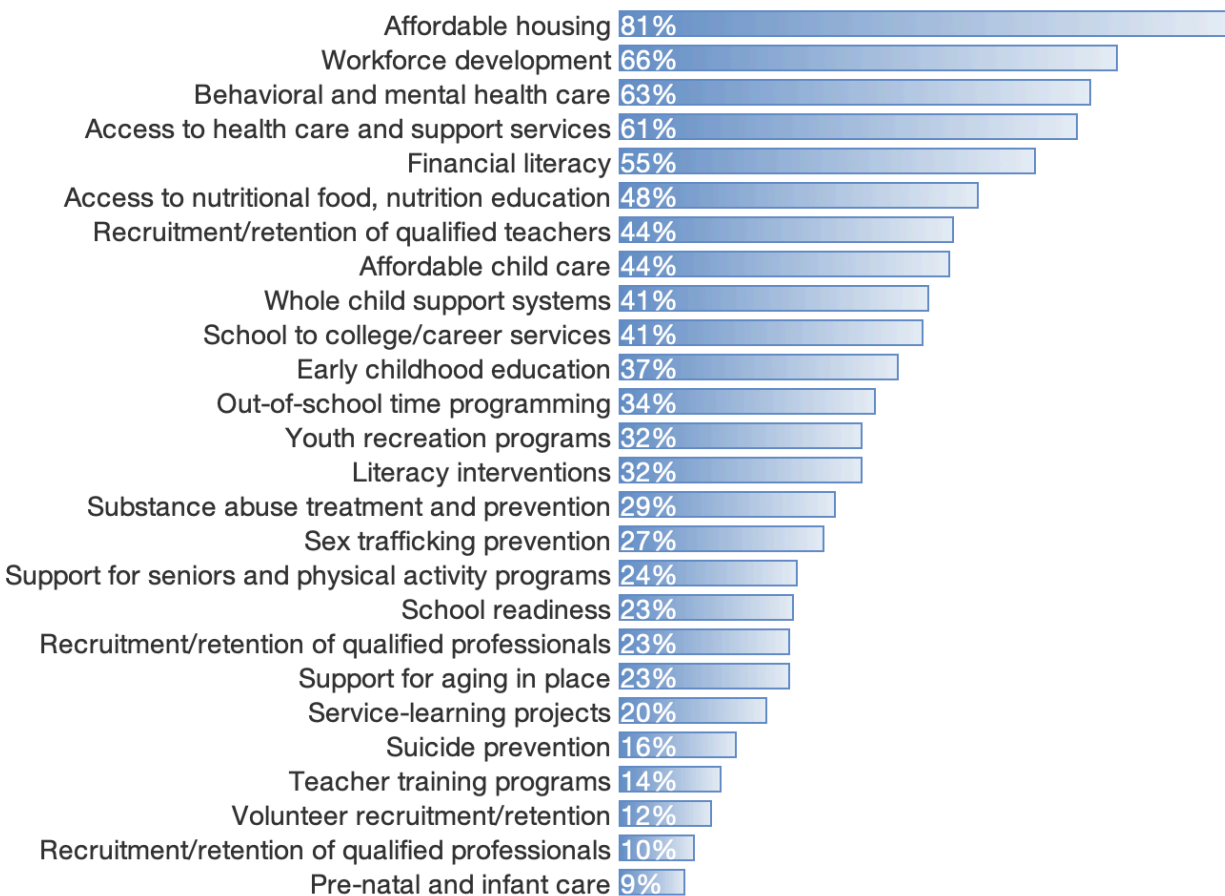


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To get a more detailed understanding of Georgians’ concerns, the survey provided 28 issue-area choices for greater specificity. Respondents could choose more than one answer. They provided, on average, five issue area priorities each.

The top three priorities reflect quality-of-life issues for all Georgians: housing, employment and healthcare. “Behavioral and mental health care” (63%) is a significant area of concern, as is “Suicide prevention” (16%). “Access to nutritional food” (48%) and “Preventing sex trafficking” (27%) were also common concerns.

Georgians’ priorities listed by issue area



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Strategic Goals

To focus the efforts of the Commission and our partners, GCSV's commissioners have developed these strategic goals and objectives for 2020-2024.

Goal 1: Strengthen Georgia's AmeriCorps Portfolio.

GCSV's AmeriCorps portfolio is the crown jewel of our strategy. For 25 years, National Service has provided a transformational impact with remarkable efficiency. GCSV will continue to address issues statewide with AmeriCorps programs as the centerpiece of our work.

There's more to be done. Our survey shows that **53%** of respondents would **encourage their organizations to seek AmeriCorps funding** and two-thirds expressed interest in a large application for many organizations to come together to create a new program.

Identify and cultivate potential AmeriCorps grantees.

- Mine the GCSV survey data for local and regional issue area priorities and potential partners.
- Conduct specific outreach and interventions to identify potential grantees.
- Identify organizations to serve as convener and funder for regional or statewide programs.
- Address barriers to applying for and managing an AmeriCorps grant.

Increase AmeriCorps program quality and sustainability.

- Reduce regulatory burden on grantees.
- Support programs to measure and evaluate impact.
- Allocate GCSV's entire funding and resources to both experienced and inexperienced programs.
- Ensure that funding decisions are sound and are based on need, capacity, past performance and levels of risk.

Secure more funds for Georgia and our service programs to solve local problems.

- Increase the number of programs funded through the AmeriCorps competitive grant process.
- Secure agreements with foundations to create partnerships to achieve common goals.
- Explore alternative funding mechanisms for GCSV and our partners.

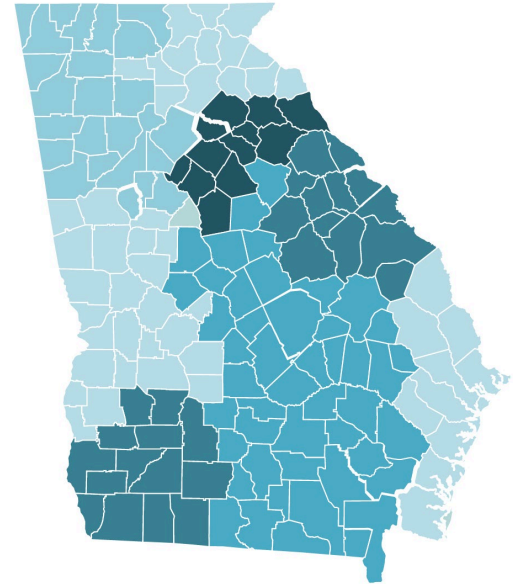
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Goal 2: Promote the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism mission, our partners and our impact.

The Commission contributes to the Department of Community Affairs vision “for Georgians of today and tomorrow to have the opportunity to live and work in thriving communities.” However, broad swaths of Georgians are not aware of the impact of their investment in AmeriCorps or the work of the Commission. Awareness of AmeriCorps ranges from around 20% of people (the lightest blue areas on the map) to just over 60% (the darkest blue section).

GCSV’s research positions us to target outreach to communities where needs are high, and awareness of our programs is low.

Make Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism and AmeriCorps household names.



- Increase awareness and enhance the reputation of National Service in every region of the state.
- Conduct targeted outreach with our partners and programs to serve as ambassadors for AmeriCorps.
- Prepare and empower Commission members to meet with other leaders in their regions and fields.

Create Branding Campaign

- Craft a marketing and outreach plan to inform the public about accomplishments, funding and service opportunities.
- Rebrand the agency as #GeorgiaServes to increase social media influence and improve state-wide communications through effective marketing.

Build upon GCSV’s unique role as both a funder and convener to support our programs.

- Support Governor Kemp to explore ways service and volunteerism can help address the most pressing needs of Georgians.
- Educate applicants to position them to submit quality applications that address community’s pressing needs and make for viable programs.

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Goal 3: Build the capacity of the GCSV to support organizations striving to meet some of the greatest needs in our state.

Service and volunteerism are tremendous force multipliers in our communities. GCSV is at the heart of this effort, but no one can do it alone. Together we can accomplish more, and the Commission cultivates strategic partnerships to get things done for the entire state.

Across the state, Georgians want to do more. Georgians prefer to be empowered in solving local problems and they want to share ideas and resources with others. Results from the survey show a strong consensus that the State Service Plan include steps and resources to *strengthen local efforts to drive local solutions*. A few versions of this were proposed.

Grow the volunteer sector across Georgia.

- Redefine volunteerism in Georgia to include what makes us unique: from serving one another to serving on the boards of the greatest organizations in the nation.
- Gather and synthesize information about volunteer efforts across the state.
- Increase volunteerism in every region of the state.

Help to create tools to capture the service of Georgians.

- Launch a call to service: “What’s your passion?”
- Assist local non-profit innovation labs to give citizens a platform to get involved.
- Build a network of community groups to participate in problem solving and training sessions.
- Find a venue to survey non-profits to determine the tool most used to capture volunteer service statistics.

Foster state and local collaboration.

- Identify statewide conveners and convenings—build upon existing partnerships to promote and support service and volunteerism.
- Conduct a statewide “asset mapping” process, an inventory of efforts and organizations engaging volunteers to solve problems.



Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism

Contact Information

The Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism
Linda Thompson, Executive Director
60 Executive Park South, NE
Atlanta, GA 30329
(404) 679-4840
AmeriCorpsGA@dca.ga.gov
Website: www.dca.ga.gov