



Georgia Healthy Housing Coalition (GHHC) Housing Advocacy Plan Priorities

In 2023, the Georgia Healthy Housing Coalition (“GHHC”) created an equity-driven Housing Advocacy Plan that incorporates an array of strategies to increase access to stable, healthy housing, reduce evictions to the national average, and improve housing conditions across the state.

The Georgia Healthy Housing Coalition (“GHHC”) is Georgia’s only statewide coalition dedicated to improving housing stability and living conditions. Founded and led by Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice since 2018, GHHC’s 80 member organizations innovate solutions to Georgia’s housing conditions crisis and collectively advocate for equity-driven policy reforms at the local, state, and federal level.

GHHC developed the Housing Advocacy Plan’s policy priorities below in conversations with coalition members and housing advocates across the state. A first for Georgia, the Housing Advocacy Plan is a pragmatic strategy developed by community organizations across the state seeking to eliminate racial disparities in housing stability and conditions, reduce eviction rates, stabilize tens of thousands of homes, and improve housing conditions.

Policy Priorities:

- **Strengthen the Warranty of Habitability**
 - Research and identify legislative options for improving enforcement of the implied warranty of habitability for residential tenancies.
- **Rental Registration and Inspection**
 - Introduce and secure passage of legislation authorizing increased home-rule authority for local governments to conduct rental registration and inspection programs (e.g., amend OCGA 36-74-30(b)).
- **Right to Cure Pre-Eviction Filing**
 - Advocate for legislation that provides written notice of eviction and a pre-eviction filing right to cure, akin to HB 408 in 2022 session, championed by Georgia ACT, GHHC member organization.
- **Tenants Bill of Rights**
 - Support state and local adopted of Tenants’ Bill of Rights, with specific protections for children, championed by Housing Justice League.

- **Protect and Expand Safe and Healthy Housing**

- a. Advocate for use of available federal, state, and local funding now, including ARPA and COVID-relief funds for healthy housing/eviction protection.
- b. Protect the State Low-Income Housing Tax Credit as a significant and continuing source of funding for new affordable multi-family housing statewide. Support efforts of the Georgia Affordable Housing Coalition: [Georgia Affordable Housing Coalition \(gahcoalition.org\)](https://gahcoalition.org).
- c. Support significant increase in the annual appropriation for Affordable Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless, which is currently approximately \$3 million in state dollars.
- d. Authorize revenues for new State Affordable Housing Trust Fund, or appropriations to local jurisdictions with local Housing Trust Funds. Support efforts of GHHC member organizations, Georgia ACT/Enterprise Community Partners/Center for Community Progress.
- e. Support work of partners in seeking new property tax exemption for non-profits that rent affordably to families at 0-80% AMI.
- f. Support state policy agenda items raised by GHHC members including, for example, advocate to amend Urban Residential Finance Authority statutes to allow communities with lower population threshold (e.g., 100,000) to create such authorities (Housing Savannah Task Force Recommendation 2021).

- **Healthy Housing and Tenant Protections**

- a. Research and explore authorization of appropriate tenant protections including warranty of habitability protections required in residential leases.
- b. Advocate for legislation that provides written notice of eviction and a pre-eviction filing right to cure, akin to HB 408 in 2022 session, championed by Georgia ACT.
- c. Adopt Tenants' Bill of Rights, with specific protections for children, championed by Housing Justice League.
- d. Authorize increased home-rule authority for local governments to conduct rental registration and inspection programs (e.g., amend OCGA 36-74-30(b)).
- e. Research and explore authorization for tenants to withhold rent to ensure repairs.
- f. Research and advocate for improvements to mobile-home safety and other regulations, perhaps modeled on Florida warranty of habitability for mobile homes.
- g. Consider authorization of adding code enforcement fines and fees to property tax bills for collection and offer such fines lien priority junior only to property taxes (with exemptions for owner-occupants).
- h. Amend OCGA 44-7-19 to authorize rent control at local option.
- i. Expand rights to families living out of hotels. *[Issue pending in Supreme Court now.]*
- j. Consider mitigation or regulation to reduce high utility rates in South Georgia championed by local housing advocacy organizations, Georgia Watch and SOWEGA Rising.

GHHC's initiatives increase housing stability and eviction protections for families and increase public awareness of dangerous housing conditions. The coalition's working groups develop legislative and policy initiatives, conduct important legal and social research, coordinate responses to legislation, and create strategies to grow the coalition's diversity and effectiveness.