Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

GoATL
Community Capacity Fund
2025 Report

Invest for Impact.

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75 Years Investing in a More Equitable Atlanta

Today, communities across metro Atlanta are navigating increasingly complex challenges—from nonprofit sustainability and affordable housing to early childhood education, economic mobility, and food security.

To respond to these challenges, partnership is crucial. Strong communities rely on community leaders and mission-driven organizations that have the capacity to find solutions, create opportunity, and adapt as needs evolve. Investing in that capacity—and the systems that support it—is one of the most powerful ways to create lasting community impact.

For 75 years, the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta has worked alongside donors, nonprofits, and community leaders to help our region meet evolving needs and seize new opportunities. The GoATL Community Capacity Fund builds on that legacy by investing in the organizations and systems that help communities thrive.

Through impact investments in mission-aligned intermediaries, including Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), nonprofit lenders, and specialized financing partners, the fund expands access to capital in communities and sectors often overlooked by traditional markets.

By providing flexible, repayable financing, GoATL supports organizations addressing some of metro Atlanta's most pressing challenges, from affordable housing and economic mobility to education, healthy food access, and nonprofit sustainability.

As of year-end 2025, the GoATL Community Capacity Fund has invested more than $13.35 million across Affordable Housing, Economic Inclusion, Health & Environment, and Education & Youth Development and is 99.8% deployed. Because investments are repaid and redeployed, each dollar has the potential to create impact many times over. Supported by Community Foundation capital, donor-advised fund investors, and external partners, the fund serves as a bridge between philanthropic intent and lasting community impact—connecting resources with the organizations and solutions helping metro Atlanta thrive.

The GoATL Community Capacity Fund helps communities thrive by connecting philanthropic capital with the organizations, partners, and solutions that strengthen metro Atlanta.

Investing in Atlanta's Critical Issues

NONPROFIT SUSTAINABILITY

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

ECONOMIC INCLUSION

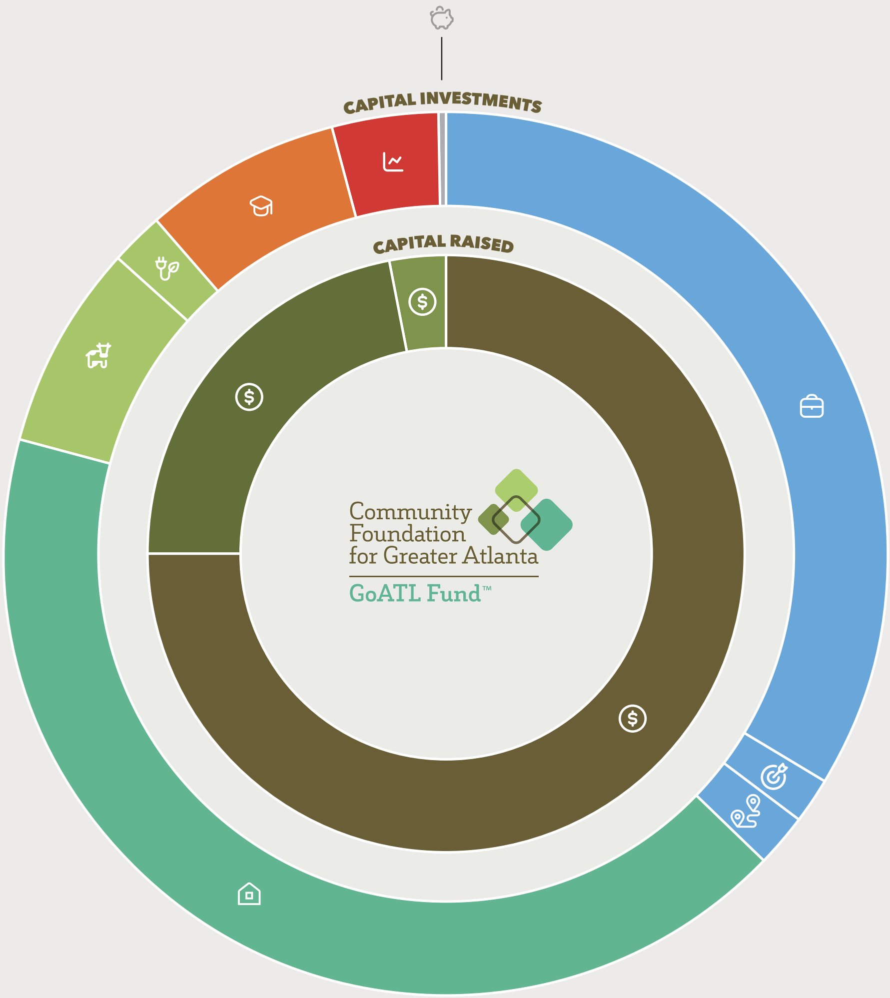
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

FOOD SYSTEMS & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Investing for Impact

Celebrating its seventh year of operation in 2025, the **GoATL Community Capacity Fund** continues to invest in the region's most innovative intermediaries to achieve impacts in areas such as Affordable Housing, Economic Inclusion, Education & Youth Development, and Environment & Health.



2025 CAPITAL INVESTMENTS $13.35M

ECONOMIC INCLUSION

SMALL BUSINESS LOANS
$4.5M
34% OF BUDGET
26,272 jobs created or retained

IMPACT LOANS
$0.25M
2% OF BUDGET
94 loans issued for emergency rental assistance, car repair and health needs

IMMIGRATION LOANS
$0.25M
2% OF BUDGET
18 loans issued

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SINGLE-FAMILY & MULTIFAMILY
$5.6M
42% OF BUDGET
59 single-family and 166 multi-family units built or preserved

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

HEALTHY FOODS
$1.0M
7% OF BUDGET
265 acres of organic farmland perserved

HOME EFFICIENCY UPGRADES
$0.25M
2% OF BUDGET
4 new loans issued (insulation, roof, solar, siding)

EDUCATION & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

K-12 EDUCATION
$1.0M
7% OF BUDGET
6,053 seats created or preserved

NONPROFIT CAPACITY

BUILDING FINANCIAL RESILIENCE
$0.5M
4% OF BUDGET

NET CAPITAL AVAILABLE TO INVEST

$23K
<1% OF BUDGET

2025 CAPITAL RAISED $13.37M

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION CAPITAL
$10.0M
75% OF INCOME

DAF CAPITAL
$2.9M
21% OF INCOME

EXTERNAL CAPITAL
$0.5M
4% OF INCOME

The **GoATL Community Capacity Fund** is open to new donor investment on a rolling basis, subject to terms and conditions. Total investments represent funded and committed investments as of December 31, 2025 and impact outcomes achieved during calendar year 2025.

Strengthening Atlanta's Nonprofit Financial Backbone

Metro Atlanta nonprofits are facing unprecedented financial uncertainty, and strong nonprofits are essential to addressing housing, education, health, and economic opportunity.

Atlanta's nonprofits deliver every day: housing families, training workers, educating children, and responding when crisis strikes. But metro Atlanta has long lacked a nonprofit-focused lender offering flexible, mission-aligned capital for nonprofits. Without that support, many organizations operate on thin margins, face constant cash-flow pressure, and rely on short-term fixes that can undermine long-term sustainability.

In response to this persistent gap, the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, through our GoATL Community Capacity Fund, partnered with **Nonprofit Finance Fund** (**NFF**), a national leader in nonprofit lending and financial consulting, to bring specialized nonprofit financing to the region.

Founded more than 40 years ago, NFF is a nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that provides nonprofits with loans, financial consulting, and thought leadership designed specifically for mission-driven organizations. Since 1980, NFF has deployed more than $1.3 billion to nearly 1,000 nonprofits nationwide, helping organizations strengthen operations, invest in facilities, manage cash flow, and weather financial uncertainty.

WHY ATLANTA, AND WHY NOW

This partnership emerged from growing concern among local funders about the financial strain nonprofits are facing: pressures intensified by inflation, delayed government payments, and uncertainty around future federal funding. In NFF's most recent State of the Nonprofit Sector Survey, Georgia ranked second nationally in participation, underscoring the scale of need. Survey results revealed that many nonprofits are experiencing rising demand for services while operating with limited cash reserves and increasing exposure to funding delays and cuts.

At the same time, local conversations convened by the Community Foundation and the Georgia Social Impact Collaborative highlighted a structural challenge: while Atlanta has strong philanthropic support, it lacks a nonprofit-focused lender able to provide working capital, bridge loans, and lines of credit alongside deep financial technical assistance. Traditional banks often cannot underwrite nonprofit borrowers, and most CDFIs prioritize small businesses or housing rather than nonprofit operations.

THE GOATL INVESTMENT

To address this gap, GoATL made a $500,000 catalytic investment in NFF. This five-year, unsecured investment allows NFF to begin offering nonprofit-focused lending products across Georgia, with an emphasis on the Community Foundation's 23-county region.

This initial capital is expected to be leveraged into approximately $2 million in loans, supporting nonprofits with:

- Working capital to stabilize operations
- Bridge financing to manage delayed government or grant payments
- Debt refinancing to replace high-cost or personally guaranteed loans

Over time, as capital is repaid and redeployed, this investment could support 16–20 nonprofit loans over a five- to seven-year period, creating a revolving source of flexible, affordable capital for the sector.

BEYOND CAPITAL: BUILDING FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

What distinguishes NFF's approach is that lending is paired with robust financial consulting and technical assistance. NFF works closely with nonprofit leaders and boards to strengthen financial management, improve cash flow planning, and align financing decisions with mission goals. In 2024 alone, NFF delivered more than 25,000 hours of financial consulting nationwide, reaching thousands of nonprofit leaders.

This dual approach of capital plus capacity aligns directly with the Community Foundation's long-standing commitment to nonprofit sustainability. In early 2026, the Community Foundation launched the Nonprofit Sector Sustainability Fund in response to evolving federal funding conditions. NFF is the partner to help deliver training, coaching, and financial strategy support to affected organizations.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A STRONGER ECOSYSTEM

This partnership represents more than a single investment. It is a systems-level intervention. By bringing a proven nonprofit lender into the Atlanta market, the Community Foundation and GoATL are helping establish the building blocks of a healthier nonprofit financing ecosystem, one that complements grantmaking, reduces financial fragility, and allows nonprofits to focus on delivering impact rather than managing crisis.

As Atlanta's nonprofit sector navigates a period of heightened uncertainty, this collaboration reflects a shared belief: sustaining community impact requires not only generosity, but the right financial tools to help nonprofits adapt, grow, and endure.

"Nonprofits are often asked to solve society's most complex challenges while operating with limited financial flexibility. This partnership helps ensure organizations in metro Atlanta have access not only to capital, but to the tools, expertise, and support they need to build long-term resilience and deepen their impact."

Aisha Benson
President and CEO
Nonprofit Finance Fund

Preserving Farmland, Growing Opportunity: Woodland Gardens

Local food systems, land preservation, and access to healthy food are increasingly important community priorities as Georgia continues to grow.

> Celia Barss and John Cooper, organic farmers and owners of Woodlands Gardens near Athens. Georgia.

For more than 25 years, Woodland Gardens has been a cornerstone of Georgia's local food system, providing certified organic vegetables, fruit and flowers to families, restaurants and farmers markets across the Athens and Atlanta regions. Today, thanks in part to support from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta's investment through the GoATL Community Capacity Fund in The Conservation Fund's Farms Fund, the farm took a major step toward a more secure future: permanent ownership of the land it has stewarded for decades.

Located on 48 acres near Athens, **Woodland Gardens** is led by veteran organic farmer Celia Barss, who has more than 22 years of farm management experience and is widely recognized as one of the region's leading organic producers. The farm supports a full-time staff, operates more than 20 high tunnels and maintains relationships with dozens of restaurant and market partners throughout the region.

When the longtime property owners decided to sell, Barss was ready to take over ownership of the farm business but faced a challenge familiar to many farmers: the high cost of farmland near growing urban areas. Through its innovative Buy-Support-Protect-Sell model, The Conservation Fund purchased the property and leased it to Barss, creating a patient pathway to ownership while ensuring the land remained in agricultural production.

The Capacity Fund's investment in the Farms Fund helps make transactions like this possible. By providing flexible capital, the fund can acquire threatened farmland, protect it through conservation easements and ultimately transfer ownership to farmers at an affordable price. At Woodland Gardens, that model is helping preserve one of the last fruit and vegetable farms in Athens-Clarke County while securing the future of a thriving local business.

"Woodland Gardens represents exactly what the Farms Fund was created to achieve," said Krisztian Varsa, Director of Farms Fund at The Conservation Fund. "With support from partners like the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, we are helping experienced farmers gain ownership of the land they steward, while ensuring that productive farmland remains protected and available for future generations."

As one of the first farmers in the Farms Fund portfolio to purchase their property, Barss and Woodland Gardens demonstrate how strategic investment can strengthen local food systems, preserve agricultural land and create lasting community impact across Georgia.

Krisztian Varsa
Director of Farms Fund
The Conservation Fund

"Woodland Gardens represents exactly what the Farms Fund was created to achieve. With support from partners like the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, we are helping experienced farmers gain ownership of the land they steward, while ensuring that productive farmland remains protected and available for future generations."

Mobilizing a Rapid Philanthropic response to Keep Georgia's Head Start Programs Open

Access to early childhood education is one of the most important determinants of long-term opportunity for children and families.

In the fall of 2025, thousands of Georgia children were at risk of losing access to the early learning programs their families rely on.

A federal government shutdown had paused key administrative functions in Washington, DC, leaving several Georgia Head Start providers unable to access funds that had already been approved by Congress. With grant cycles scheduled to renew on November 1, there was no one available to sign contracts or release payments.

Without those funds, programs serving more than 6,500 children and employing more than 1,000 staff faced the possibility of shutting down, including three of the largest Head Start providers across metro Atlanta: the **YMCA of Metro Atlanta**, **Sheltering Arms** and **Easterseals North Georgia**.

For families living near or below the poverty line, the consequences would have been immediate. Parents could lose reliable childcare and the ability to go to work. Hundreds of teachers and staff members could be furloughed. And thousands of children would lose access to safe, high-quality learning environments that provide meals, education, and family support services.

A CRISIS THAT REQUIRED SPEED

Head Start providers request federal funds regularly, often every two weeks, to cover operating costs. When the shutdown prevented those payments from being released, nonprofit leaders began preparing for difficult decisions.

For organizations like the YMCA of Metro Atlanta, which is the largest provider of Head Start programs in the state serving more than 2,300 children and 800 staff, the support was critical.

"Head Start isn't just daycare or pre-K," said Lauren Koontz, CEO, YMCA of Metro Atlanta. "It's a full-service program that provides meals, education, and wraparound support services that help families move toward greater stability. Without intervention, those services—and the stability they provide—would have been at risk."

At Sheltering Arms, one of the state's largest Head Start providers, nearly 900 children and 200 staff were directly affected.

"With the shutdown, we suddenly faced some very tough decisions," said Blythe Robinson, president and CEO of Sheltering Arms. "The potential impact on families and educators across our community was enormous."

Providers quickly aligned messaging and coordinated their response, but solving the financial challenge required a broader solution. That's when they turned to the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta.

MOBILIZING METRO ATLANTA'S PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY

The challenge required more than funding. It required coordination, speed, and partnership. Within hours, the Community Foundation convened philanthropic leaders across metro Atlanta to explore how the community could respond.

Head Start providers estimated they would need approximately $8 million in temporary funding to keep programs operating through the end of the year while federal payments were delayed.

To meet this need, the Community Foundation leveraged its impact investing program to structure a bridge financing solution providing immediate capital to cover operating costs until federal funds could be released.

The Foundation ultimately provided $4.7 million in short-term bridge loans, with flexible terms designed to give providers the stability and breathing room they needed to continue serving families without interruption.

The Community Foundation also mobilized its philanthropic network. Within 48 hours, 16 foundations across metro Atlanta agreed to provide $7.4 million in unfunded guarantees, pledging to step in and cover the loans if federal funding did not arrive.

"It's similar to cosigning a lease," said Sydney Hulebak, director of impact investing at the Community Foundation. "If everything goes as planned, no money moves. But if something goes wrong, the guarantors step in."

The rapid collaboration allowed providers to remain open during the shutdown.

KEEPING DOORS OPEN FOR FAMILIES

The results were immediate and far-reaching. Across Georgia:

- 6,500 children continued receiving early learning services
- 800 educators remained employed
- Thousands of families were able to maintain childcare and continue working

When the federal government reopened in late November, the delayed funds were released. By January 2026, the bridge loans had been fully repaid.

But for those involved, the true measure of success wasn't financial.

"The real win is that the doors stayed open," Hulebak said. "Families' lives were not disrupted, and children continued receiving the care and education they depend on."

The model also proved replicable. Using a similar approach, the YMCA of Metro Atlanta took the same idea to the Community Foundation for the CSRA in Augusta, Ga. to help keep its local Head Start programs operating during the shutdown.

"This was a true partnership story," said Mindy Binderman, who formerly served as executive director of the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS). "None of this could have happened without relationships."

For leaders across the sector, the moment demonstrated the unique role a community foundation can play.

"We were able to bring partners together and leverage resources quickly to meet a critical need," Hulebak said. "That's what community foundations do best."

Looking Ahead

The stories in this report demonstrate what is possible when philanthropic capital is paired with trust, expertise, and collaboration. Whether preserving farmland, strengthening nonprofit resilience, expanding access to affordable housing, supporting small businesses, or helping critical services remain available during times of uncertainty, the GoATL Community Capacity Fund is investing in the people, organizations, and systems that help communities thrive. As metro Atlanta continues to grow and evolve, so too will the opportunities and challenges facing our region. The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta remains committed to bringing people and resources together to strengthen community capacity, mobilize philanthropic capital, and create lasting impact for generations to come.

Because lasting progress happens when we invest not only in outcomes, but in the organizations and partnerships that make those outcomes possible. That belief has guided the Community Foundation's work for 75 years—and continues to shape how we invest in Atlanta's future today.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?
For more information, please contact:

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Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

ABOUT US
The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta is the region's philanthropic center of gravity, inspiring and leading Atlanta toward equity and shared prosperity for all. Neighbor to neighbor and heart to heart, we're building a better ATL through partnership with local nonprofits, civic leaders, financial advisors, and generous donors throughout the community. A fixture since 1951, CFGA shepherds more than $1.8 billion assets and deploys more than $235 million annually to thousands of nonprofit partners working to realize Atlanta's full potential.

For more information visit:
cfgreateratlanta.org/goatl