

# Housing Data 101



A brief guide for Georgia leaders to tell compelling stories and make informed decisions with community data.

## What is community data?

Data exists at many levels. While national or state-level data may be helpful for providing context for the causes we serve, community data is essential for identifying where inequities exist and how we can align resources with the needs of our community. It helps ensure we're providing the right services to the right people.

## The case for more standard data.

Georgia's nonprofits, agencies, and organizations often address shared or overlapping issues. The more we can describe these issues and evaluate our impact with standardized indicators, the easier it is to learn from one another, form authentic partnerships, tell compelling stories, and secure funding.

## Equity-driven. Data-informed.

When used improperly, data can perpetuate inequities. For instance, a data metric indicating poor performance could lead to limited funding in the places that need it most. That is why it is crucial to focus on identifying and addressing disparities when using data to understand community needs and inform policy, programming, and funding decisions. Data can guide you to answers but is not the answer in itself. So, use data as a critical navigation tool and let equity be your destination.

## Why is housing data important?

Understanding housing data is essential for monitoring housing market conditions and identifying opportunities to address housing inequities and challenges. For example, rising average home prices and rents could indicate a tight housing market; and high cost-burdened rates may indicate the need for improvements to affordable housing. Understanding housing data can add clarity and eliminate some of the mystery when trying to prioritize what and where efforts should be focused in our communities.



**Neighborhood Nexus** supports Georgia's mission-driven organizations to ask the right questions, use the best data, tell compelling stories, and make informed decisions. We accomplish this by offering community data from dozens of sources all in one place, building organizational data capacity, and providing custom projects. Find out more at [neighborhoodnexus.org](https://neighborhoodnexus.org).

## AVAILABLE GEOGRAPHIES LEGEND

The data referenced in this document is publicly available. "Available Geographies" refers to the various levels or areas by which that information can be reviewed.

- S** State
- R** Region
- C** County
- M** Submarket (neighborhood or suburb)
- Z** Zip Code
- T** Census Tract



Housing advocates, organizers, and policy-makers all need good data to help argue for, design, and implement better, stronger, and more just housing policies and programs. Anecdotes and stories are critical too, but they are supported by good and timely data on the extent of housing injustice and changes in the market.

—Dan Immergluck,  
PhD Professor, Urban Studies Institute,  
Georgia State University



## Indicators

### 01 HOME PRICE Original source: [Metro Atlanta Housing Strategy](#)



Average home price per square foot

#### Why it matters

Home prices convey information about housing market conditions and affordability. The price of a home is one of the most important considerations when buying a home, and it could be the difference between someone being able to purchase a home or not.

#### Neighborhood Nexus recommendation

Compare home prices across geographies to understand which neighborhoods suffer from a shortage of affordable housing. Home prices in conjunction with demographic data reveals which groups may be at risk of housing displacement due to rapidly increasing home prices.

#### Helpful data tools

- [Redfin Housing Market Data](#)



## 02 HOUSING SUPPLY

Original source: [American Community Survey \(ACS\)](#)

S R C M Z T

Total number of housing units

### Why it matters

The housing supply has major implications for housing market conditions; if there are not enough units in supply, it could increase prices or cause unfavorable market conditions for those looking to buy.

### Neighborhood Nexus recommendation

Use this metric in conjunction with population data to target affordable housing efforts to the needs of the community. For example, an area needing additional housing supply that suffers from sprawl may benefit from prioritizing development of affordable multifamily units.

### Helpful data tools

- [FRED Housing Inventory](#)

## 03 PERCENT HOMEOWNERS

Original source: [ACS](#)

S R C M Z T

Percent of households who own their home

### Why it matters

Homeownership enables individuals and families to build wealth and often helps improve health, educational attainment, and safety.

### Neighborhood Nexus recommendation

Use this metric in conjunction with demographic data to understand which groups have lower rates of homeownership, and advocate for affordable housing and equitable access to home loans for groups that have traditionally experienced barriers to homeownership.

### Helpful data tools

- [Kids Count](#)

## 04 PERCENT RENTERS

Original source: [ACS](#)

S R C M Z T

Percent of households who rent their home

### Why it matters

Renters may be more susceptible to housing instability, substandard living conditions, and financial hardship as rent prices increase. Further, renters do not have the same ability to acquire wealth as homeowners.

### Neighborhood Nexus recommendation:

In areas with a high percent of renters, evaluate the available housing supply; advocate for policies that improve the affordable housing supply while also ensuring equitable access to homeownership.

### Helpful data tools

- [Out of Reach Georgia](#)

## 05 AVERAGE RENT

Original source: [ACS](#)

S R C M Z T

### Average gross rent

#### Why it matters

Housing is typically the largest monthly expense for a household, so higher rent makes it tougher for a household to afford other monthly expenses such as food and transportation. Higher rents can also result in fewer opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals to find safe and stable housing.

#### Neighborhood Nexus recommendation

Use this metric in conjunction with household income data. In areas where rent is unaffordable compared to average income, advocate for effective rental assistance programs and policies.

#### Helpful data tools

- [Zillow GA Rental Market](#)

## 06 HOUSING VACANCIES

Original source: [ACS](#)

S R C M Z T

### Percent of housing units that are vacant

#### Why it matters

A low vacancy rate means there are fewer homes available for interested buyers, which can cause housing shortages and unaffordability.

#### Neighborhood Nexus recommendation

Use vacancy rate data to understand market conditions and where to advocate for increased affordable housing units.

#### Helpful data tools

- [FRED Home Vacancy Rate](#)

## 07 MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING UNITS

Original source: [ACS](#)

S R C M Z T

### Percent of multi-family (5+) housing units

#### Why it matters

Multi-family units have pros and cons depending on the circumstance. They are typically more affordable and more efficient than single-family units, but they can provide less space per person and be susceptible to unfavorable living conditions.

#### Neighborhood Nexus recommendation:

Use this metric in conjunction with other housing indicators to better understand which communities may benefit from improvements to existing multifamily units versus creating additional affordable multifamily units.

#### Helpful data tools

- [DCA Multifamily Affordable Rental Housing](#)



## 08 HOUSING COST BURDEN

Original source: [ACS](#)



Percent of households who spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs

### Why it matters

Those who spend more than 30% of their income on housing may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, transportation, health care, or emergency expenses.

### Neighborhood Nexus recommendation

Use this metric in conjunction with demographic data to better understand which communities are most cost burdened. Target affordable housing efforts in those areas, and advocate for living wages and effective assistance policies.

### Helpful data tools

- [National Low Income Housing Coalition: Georgia](#)
- [Southeastern Rental Affordability Tracker](#)

## 09 HOME LOAN DENIALS

Original source: [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Home Mortgage Disclosure Act \(HMDA\)](#)



Percent of home loan applicants denied

### Why it matters

Home loan denials may prevent households from owning a home which can hinder their quality of life and ability to acquire wealth.

### Neighborhood Nexus recommendation:

Use this metric in conjunction with demographic data to evaluate biases in home loan denials; then, advocate for equitable access to home loans.

### Helpful data tools

- [Urban Institute Denial Rates report](#)

## 10 HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Original source: [ACS](#)



Average number of people per household

### Why it matters

Household size indicates information about a region's population density and housing supply needs; if average household size continues to shrink as it has historically, it will create the need for additional housing units which can lead to environmental consequences.

### Neighborhood Nexus recommendation:

Consider household size in conjunction with population data to understand which communities may benefit from efficient housing solutions such as development of affordable multifamily units in areas with sprawl.

### Helpful data tools

- [33n Sizing Up Trends in Household Size](#)

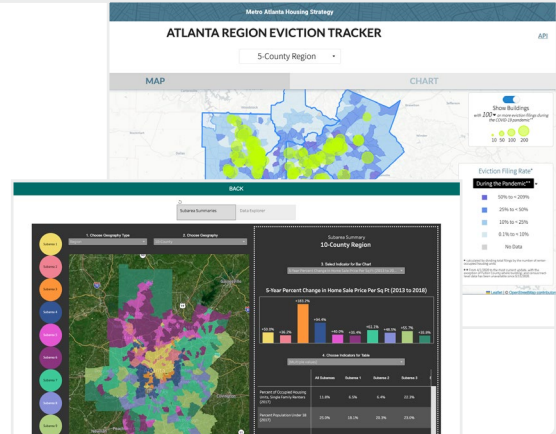


# From the Field

## METRO ATLANTA HOUSING STRATEGY

The Metro Atlanta Housing Strategy (MAHS) contains multiple useful tools including the [Atlanta Region Eviction Tracker](#) and the [MAHS Data Explorer](#). The Housing Strategy is used to compare the differences between submarkets and to identify which communities struggle with evictions, lack of affordable housing, and other housing challenges.

*Features indicators 01-09*



## HOME OWNERSHIP AFFORDABILITY MONITOR

The [Home Ownership Affordability Monitor](#) (HOAM) was developed by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta to measure if a median-income household can afford the typical costs associated with owning a median-priced home. Users can view data at the metro-level and county-level to understand where affordable housing efforts can be targeted.

*Features indicators 01, 08*



## EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PRIORITY INDEX

The [Emergency Rental Assistance Priority Index](#) was developed by the Urban Institute in 2021 to measure where housing assistance is most needed. Users can view both housing and socioeconomic data to understand which populations to target rental assistance to.

*Features indicators 04, 08*





## Additional Information

### ADDITIONAL INDICATORS

- Median Sale Price
- Average Days on Market
- Number of Housing Starts
- Average Mortgage Rate
- Mortgage Delinquency Rate
- Percent Subsidized Housing Units
- Housing Displacement
- Eviction Rate
- Foreclosure Rate

### DATA SOURCES & TOOLS

- [DataNexus](#)
- [HUD's Data Portal](#)
- [Metro Atlanta Racial Equity Atlas](#)
- [Atlanta Beltline Data Explorer](#)
- [United Way 211 Data](#)
- [Atlanta Fed's Center for Housing & Policy](#)
- [Partners for Home Dashboard](#)



## Caution: Data Isn't Perfect

When using data, be cautious and remember that data can have gaps, be biased, or perpetuate inequities. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

### Equity

Certain data points may contribute to systemic inequities. If you see correlations between deficits and certain geographic areas or demographic groups, use this as an opportunity to advocate for additional funding or resources for these communities. Don't use low performance as a justification to deny opportunities to communities that have been consistently and systematically overlooked.

### Validity

Available data may not accurately represent the indicator. Look at how the metric is defined and see if the data actually represents this definition. If it doesn't, you may need to explore different metrics that may be more valid or proceed with caution if the invalid metric is the closest approximation of the data you need.

### Reliability

Available data may not represent the defined metric consistently across all geographies and time frames. Look to see if there are any major differences in the data across categories. If something stands out, it may not have been collected or documented the same way across all categories.

### Availability

Certain data points may not be publicly available for all years or geographies defined. Do not ignore gaps in data when you see them. Instead, ask yourself why there might be gaps and determine if it affects how useful the data is for your purpose.

**Data Primers in this series:**

Access Data 101

Demographic Data 101

Education Data 101

Environmental Data 101

Health Data 101

Household Economics Data 101

**Housing Data 101**

Workforce Data 101



Gaps in housing data may make it difficult to identify and address inequities in your community. Neighborhood Nexus can provide additional data points and help you leverage community data to support those you serve and achieve your organization's strategic priorities.

Visit [neighborhoodnexus.org/our-services](https://neighborhoodnexus.org/our-services) to find out more!