



Economic Development Guide

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Welcome to the Georgia REALTORS® Economic Development Guide.

REALTORS® know their communities better than anyone, from both economic and quality of life perspectives. This makes our members ideal community leaders to engage in local economic development efforts.

Georgia is fortunate to have significant economic engines throughout the entire state, giving each local association opportunities to make a difference in their own communities.

This guide is intended to serve as a tool and reference manual to assist local associations and Georgia REALTORS® in their efforts to engage with economic development and business recruitment efforts in their local communities.



WHY GET INVOLVED IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?



**Every day,
REALTORS®
go out into
the
community
and “sell”
their
communities
to potential
clients.**

Not only do the fields of economic development and real estate share a natural connection, economic development brings tangible benefits to REALTORS® and their business.

Economic development is the process by which a community grows by attracting good paying jobs and desirable amenities. It benefits the community as a whole and strengthens its economy and vitality.

Strong economic development efforts allow the community to grow and develop, leading to a better place to live. More jobs means more people who need to buy a home. In many cases, a community may need to build even more housing and amenities which will greatly help increase business. Industrial, flex, and office sites will bring jobs while retail opens up jobs and amenities for the community.

This benefits property managers, commercial REALTORS®, and residential REALTORS®.

GEORGIA - THE #1 STATE IN WHICH TO DO BUSINESS



Georgia's winning combination of location, workforce, existing industry strength, and business-friendly environment makes it a leading destination for domestic and international companies alike.

Oftentimes the process of recruiting a new business means that most of the discussions take place behind closed doors to maintain confidentiality. We believe that as REALTORS®, our best approach is to help these existing efforts by sharing our expertise and knowledge to aid these efforts as needed. That support can take on several roles, depending on the needs of your local economic development organization.

Building a mutually beneficial relationship will entail getting to know the people involved on both sides, understanding each other's business better, and determining how REALTORS® can provide support and invaluable inventory data for economic development professionals. REALTORS® have an incredible opportunity to build strong relationships with their local economic development efforts and assist them to achieve some big wins for your community.

WHO WORKS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN GEORGIA?

THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GDEC)

is the state agency that is charged with recruiting businesses to our state.

GDEC works with a wide network of local development authorities and economic development entities across the state to recruit, retain, and grow businesses.

GDEC also works with a network of local and regional economic development organizations to find the perfect site that meets the needs of the company interested in relocating here. Those local organizations take on different forms. Some are part of the local government, while others are independent organizations or Chambers of Commerce which contract with local governments to provide economic development recruitment for their communities. The Georgia Economic Development Association (GEDA) is the statewide trade organization to which most local economic development organizations and professionals belong.



Useful information and publications are available on GDEC's website georgia.org.

As outlined in the 2021 GDEC Annual Report, GDEC and its partners helped secure 379 new business recruitment and expansion projects in 2021. Those projects are expected to create the following:

74%

of new project locations and expansions occurred outside the 10-county metro Atlanta region

33,439

NEW JOBS

69%

of total investments occurred outside the 10-county metro Atlanta region

\$10.79 billion

IN TOTAL INVESTMENT

For members of the Georgia REALTORS®, these recruitment and expansion projects directly equate to more opportunity and more business. But how can REALTORS® tap into this wealth of opportunity and help build our communities? This brochure is designed to guide local associations and individual members through the process.

How to involve your local association in economic development



4 Steps

Now that you have some background, you can begin involving your local association in economic development.

1

Assemble a small team or committee

This should have good buy-in from leadership and staff who can help support the effort, plus members who understand the significance of the undertaking. Ideally, you will include members who already engage in economic development efforts, but commercial members generally understand this territory well already. Residential members who understand the local housing market well and know the nuances of the local community will help round out the team. Elected officials or community leaders within the membership will be invaluable as well.

2

Assess Community

During your first meeting, you'll want to figure out where your community currently stands, and where you think it should go, particularly in the context of the real estate industry. Identify strengths and weaknesses, or things you need locally. These should include things like land, housing stock, inventory, commercial properties, potential sites for development, quality of life, etc. This will help give everyone a well-rounded view of the community and put everyone on equal footing moving forward.



3

Identify Key Players

The next step will be to identify key players in economic development in your own community, or a targeted area, which could consist of a particular town, a county, or a region. Georgia REALTORS® staff can also help make introductions through our partners at the state level.



4

Set Up Meetings

Once you identify key players, set up meetings with them to learn about their efforts and see how the REALTORS® can help. Choose a small team (maybe 1-3 people) to sit down and find out more about their role in economic development locally. The goal is to supplement existing efforts with our resources and expertise through inserting REALTORS® further into the community.

Ideas to help grow your economic development efforts

- Join the local chamber of commerce and attend meetings to stay up on local business developments
- Invite your local economic development expert or chamber of commerce representative to speak at your local association meetings.
- Host or sponsor a table at an annual event with your local economic development and/or chamber of commerce offices, encouraging dialogue regarding how the local association can assist in business development in your community. Even better if elected officials attend.
- After discovering the primary focus for development in your community, proactively assist in that effort through local advocacy
- Stay abreast of proposed legislative and regulatory changes or local ordinances that could influence the viability or desirability of your community. Keep in touch with your economic development partners regarding your views, as they may serve as potential allies.
- Consider lobbying for economic development organizations funding, specific incentive packages, or changes to zoning or other ordinances to accommodate economic development.
- Identify members who already volunteer or serve in positions that make your communities stronger. Seek out and include their feedback to find new economic development opportunities.
- Offer to assist your economic development partners with presentations/social events that would assist in demonstrating your community's strengths
- Attend education sessions during GAR Conferences of the Georgia REALTORS® Economic Development Advisory Council to stay abreast of issues affecting economic development in Georgia.
- Work with local developers and utility providers to increase the number of shovel-ready properties available in your community.
- Provide appropriate sites for economic development to the organization's database via the GDEcD. If you do not have an existing relationship with GDEcD, reach out to Georgia REALTORS® staff and we can help make the connection.
- Organize and publicize a tour of a development-ready area, including site visits to properties.
- Provide local real estate industry and market information to economic development partners
- Keep in mind the GDEcD's core functions: recruiting new companies, taking care of existing employers, promoting Georgia exports, promoting the state for travel and tourism, and providing counseling for small businesses and startups. Consider sponsoring ads in future Economic Development Guides highlighting the benefits of your community in attracting business, travel and tourism.
- Support REALTOR® members' appointments to local economic development and chamber boards
- Provide relevant housing statistics which may inform their understanding of the local real estate industry
- Consider applying for a REALTOR® Party grant to support a speaker to address a topic of interest with elected officials
- For communities with a population under 30,000 people, NAR's Rural Outreach Initiative can provide special grant dollars for speakers, community surveys, and other special projects. GAR Governmental Affairs staff can assist you with these grants.
- Provide economic development professionals with inventory data through GAR Housing Statistics, RPR, or local MLS.

GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES

Global and economic development efforts go hand-in-hand, and your foundation in one will lead to success with the other.

REALTORS® are always trying to gain and maintain their competitive edge, and more than \$104 billion worth of residential real estate is sold to foreign and immigrant buyers annually, resulting in over \$5 billion in commissions for REALTORS® nationwide.

Over 1.1 million Georgians, or about 10 percent of the population, are foreign born. Georgia residents in immigrant-led households had \$26.3 billion in spending power in 2018

The continued expansion of trade and investment among countries, the ease of mobility, and the migration of people opens greater opportunities for transacting with international clients looking at Georgia. Cultural affinity, foreign language capabilities and an awareness of business trends cultivate strong relationships with international clients and bring transactions to successful conclusions.

Your association can undertake a variety of activities to help members participate in this global opportunity and we've included a few below:

- Sponsor an "At Home with Diversity" class [More Information: <https://www.nar.realtor/designations-and-certifications/at-home-with-diversity>]
- Form a Local Global Council dedicated to globally themed, education, programming and networking for your members
- Distribute to members as well as economic development and chamber of commerce offices publications from NAR
- Encourage members to earn their Certified International Property Specialist (CIPS) designation. [More Information: <https://www.nar.realtor/designations-and-certifications/cipsdesignation/become-a-cips-designee>]
- Educate members regarding how to get and handle international referrals. Distribute to members NAR's Field Guide for International Referrals
- Discover which banks/lenders, CPAs, attorneys, translators etc. are working and proficient in international transactions in your community and start a resource list
- Encourage participation in trade missions organized by your local chambers of commerce.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Understanding Opportunities for your Community

The Georgia General Assembly has made economic development a financial priority. Numerous state programs can help with development projects in your community. Georgia REALTORS® actively lobbies for the protection and continuation of these programs at the state level due to the positive impact that they have in local communities. Many of these incentives are involved in pitching economic development opportunities.

The Georgia business tax environment benefits companies in so many ways. Our corporate tax rate has been kept low for 50 years, and your tax obligation is based on one factor: your sales inside Georgia. When you learn about our job tax credits and other incentives, you'll know why so many view Georgia as good for business.

The Georgia Job Tax Credit relies on a tiered system based on the region. Map is located here: https://www.georgia.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/georgia_tax_credit_map_2021.pdf

More information on Business Tax Incentives can be found here: [georgia.org/competitive-advantages/incentives/tax-credits](https://www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/incentives/tax-credits)

To get help with specific tax questions for a business in Georgia, contact the Georgia Department of Revenue.

Conclusion

Economic development directly correlates to a prosperous real estate market. The more attractive Georgia presents itself to businesses across the state and the world, the more likely we will see investment in Georgia. This leads to not only a commercial real estate impact, but also the residential impact that their business has on new workers coming into a community.

We hope this toolkit will steer you in the right direction to being a part of this very important conversation occurring in your community and state, as well as expanding your business reach and expertise.

Your Georgia REALTORS® staff is standing by to help you as you begin to get involved with this important community building work.

Just reach out to External Affairs Officer Jeff Ledford at 678-517-7836, or jledford@garealtor.com.

Georgia REALTORS®

