

Federal Advocacy Guide: Talking Points for the 2025 August Congressional Recess



1. Expand Housing Supply and Support Local Development (HUD Programs)

Federal housing and development grants, especially Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME)/Community Home Investment Program (CHIP) provide vital funding for Georgia communities. In 2024:

- The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) awarded \$33.4 million in CDBG funds to 36 communities
- Another \$41 million was directly allocated to over 20 Georgia cities and counties
- In 2025, \$13 million in HOME/CHIP funds was allocated to 15 communities



Talking Point: These flexible programs fill financing gaps that private lenders won't cover, especially in small and rural areas. Ask your member of Congress to maintain (or modestly increase) CDBG and HOME funding in FY 2026.

2. Keep Water Infrastructure Affordable and Reliable (SRFs & WIFIA)

In FY 2024, GEFA executed \$414 million in loans through the Clean and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs), saving cities \$128 million in debt service. These investments:

- Upgrade treatment facilities
- Build new capacity
- Replace aging pipes
- Address emerging contaminants like PFAS



Talking Point: Ask for stable or increased funding for SRFs and the WIFIA program so your community can comply with federal mandates while keeping water rates manageable for residents.

3. Strengthen Disaster Resilience and Mitigation Programs

FEMA and the National Institute of Building Sciences estimate that every \$1 spent on mitigation saves \$6 in disaster costs. Georgia has experienced multiple federal disaster declarations in just the past two years.



Talking Point: Urge your congressional contacts to support robust, flexible hazard-mitigation funding and right-sized technical assistance so that even small cities can plan and invest in resilient infrastructure before disaster strikes.

4. Deliver on Transportation Infrastructure for All Cities

Georgia cities face a \$9.7 billion transportation funding need over the next five years. Federal investments are essential for:

- Reducing Metro Atlanta congestion
- Supporting the Port of Savannah
- Maintaining rural connectors
- Upgrading rail-grade crossings and freight corridors



Talking Point: Encourage Congress to:

- Protect and grow federal transportation funding.
- Direct more dollars to local governments (which own 86% of Georgia roads but receive just 11% of funds) through formula-based allocations.

5. Support Public Safety and Violence Prevention

In FY 2024, Georgia localities were eligible for \$2.4 million in Byrne-JAG formula funds, which support:

- Body-worn cameras
- Forensic tools
- Crisis-response partnerships

Programs like COPS Hiring, STOP School Violence, and Community Violence Intervention also allow cities to customize safety strategies.



Talking Point: Ask your member of Congress to protect funding for these flexible programs that support both traditional public safety and community-driven responses to crime, mental health, and addiction.

6. Defend Local Control in Federal Policymaking

Cities are most effective when they can align federal investments with local plans, budgets, and priorities. Preemption or one-size-fits-all mandates undermine this effectiveness.



Talking Point: Ask Congress to protect local authority and flexibility and oppose any funding provisions that bypass or constrain cities' ability to govern effectively.

Final Thought: Be a Voice for Your City

Federal support is essential to meeting the **\$33 billion in capital needs** Georgia cities have identified for 2025–2029. When local, state, and federal governments work together:

- Projects happen faster
- Costs go down
- Taxpayer accountability increases

Let's make sure your voice is heard. If you meet with your congressional delegation or staff during the recess, please let us know so we can track outreach and reinforce your messages.