



## Jobs for Georgia

### *A Thriving and Diverse Economy for All Georgians*

From our port in Savannah and a bustling film industry that strengthens local small businesses to the nation's busiest airport, Georgia's economy has become the envy of the South. However, our economy fails too many of our business owners and workers in several ways. Small businesses have trouble accessing capital, finding the skilled labor they need, accessing critical infrastructure like broadband, and fear the chilling effects of divisive rhetoric from politicians. Employees need better access to training and family-supporting wages, as well as child care, transportation, and health care that are too often out-of-reach. Jobs are readily available in some parts of Georgia, but communities lag behind in others.

I travel the state talking to Georgians about the future, and I know we are ready for more. We are ready for an economy that works in all 159 counties, with diverse jobs that create wealth and opportunity. As a legislator, I received an "A" rating from the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the "Friend of Labor" award for the same work in the same year. As an entrepreneur who helped hundreds of Georgia small businesses create and save thousands of jobs, I understand first-hand how we can help our small businesses thrive. As governor, I am committed to ensuring Georgia is a great place to live, work and do business.

Together, we can build an economy as strong and diverse as our citizens, one that unlocks the entrepreneurial spirit of Georgians across our state and fosters innovation. We can renew the respect for the dignity of work in every sector and region of Georgia, so that every family has the freedom and opportunity to thrive.

## Jobs for Georgia

1. **Small Business Growth:** Expand access to capital through a \$10 million investment in small business financing programs that reach all communities
2. **Infrastructure Investment:** Make jobs-rich infrastructure investments
3. **More Skills, Fewer Barriers:** Produce 22,000 new apprentices by 2022
4. **Local Jobs and Local Products:** Utilize more Georgians and Georgia products in our public projects
5. **An Open and Inclusive State:** Defend a pro-business reputation of openness and inclusion



## 1. Small Business Growth

Small businesses are central to a thriving economy in every county. Approximately 44% of Georgians<sup>i</sup> in the private workforce are employed by a small business, and we are among the highest in the nation<sup>ii</sup> for startup success. However, Georgia ranks close to the bottom — 22 out of the 25 largest states<sup>iii</sup>— in Main Street Entrepreneurship, which is the creation and success of businesses like barbershops, landscaping, manufacturing, and food service.

Rural business owners face twin challenges: how to find an educated workforce locally and how to access capital close to home. Business owners across the state face debilitating healthcare costs, which also reduce the productivity of the workforce. Women and people of color who have traditionally been left behind because of limited access to capital continue to lag, while others who have traditionally succeeded in small business ownership are beginning to fall behind.

Georgia must support a diverse array of small businesses. From providing capital for individuals who want to start a small childcare center in a county that lacks affordable options, to helping a barber open a second location or giving a young person in South Georgia the chance to start a technology company without having to leave her hometown, we can and must do more to help small business owners and entrepreneurs grow and thrive in place.

As governor, Abrams will:

- **Expand access to capital through a \$10 million investment in small business financing programs.** Through state investment in federal and local financing programs and in partnership with private lenders, we can reach more business owners and make their dreams a reality.

Additional priorities include:

- Support for small business technical assistance and training programs.
- Expanded access to health care, child care, and broadband.
- Encourage youth entrepreneurship through the [Governor's Youth Council](#) and [Cradle to Career Savings Program](#).

## 2. Infrastructure Investment

State investment in infrastructure—our airports, roads and bridges, transit systems, rail, ports, energy projects, and water systems—produces good jobs for Georgians at every skill level. Infrastructure jobs often offer more competitive pay, lower entry barriers, and better long-term prospects particularly for workers with a high school diploma or less.<sup>iv</sup> National estimates show 13,000 jobs for \$1 billion in road-building and transit investments for one year or 50,000 jobs in the long-term for public transit investment, in particular.<sup>v</sup>

Georgia has room to improve and grow jobs in the infrastructure sector. In its latest infrastructure report card, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave Georgia a “C” for infrastructure overall, with “D” grades for transit, dams, parks, and stormwater.

We need infrastructure investment for direct job growth and for economic growth overall—getting people to work, moving goods across the state, expanding international trade, attracting new businesses, and protecting our environmental resources.

As governor, Abrams will:

- **Balance Our States’ Needs.** Abrams will promote balance between urban and rural Georgia, equity in spending so our dollars reach all communities, and innovation to harness advances in infrastructure technology.
- **Make Transit a State-wide Priority.** From Metro Atlanta rail and buses to non-emergency medical transit in Dooly County, we need leadership that’s committed to partnering with communities and investing in transit.
- **Empower Local Infrastructure Investments.** Abrams will empower communities to invest in the infrastructure that they need most. Abrams will work with legislative leaders to add flexibility to the local option sales taxes for transportation, so they can be infrastructure SPLOSTs and to expand opportunities for multi-county projects.
- **Expand Broadband Access.** Internet access is a basic service now. Businesses can’t grow without it. Yet, 638,000 Georgia households live in areas that lack access to high-speed internet.<sup>vi</sup> I will support the Department of Transportation’s efforts to use our right of ways for expanded Internet access, advance the new framework from Senate Bill 402 to identify and close service gaps, and protect local community efforts to meet their citizens’ broadband needs.
- **Support Our Ports.** Abrams will support the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project, Network Georgia Initiative, and other port activities to ensure Georgia is the premier gateway for the U.S. We will capitalize on the port growth and new inland ports to spread economic benefits across the state.



- **Invest in Advanced Energy Jobs.** Abrams will invest in creating 25,000 to 45,000 new [advanced energy jobs](#) in manufacturing, installation, coding, administration, and more in industries such as solar, wind, hydro, and biomass.
- **Expand Financing through Bonds and Public-Private Partnerships.** Abrams will leverage our premier AAA bond rating to invest in capital projects across the state. She will encourage public-private partnerships for infrastructure, where appropriate, to create jobs, speed investments and solve critical challenges, while protecting public assets for all residents.

### 3. More Skills, Fewer Barriers

Apprenticeships set workers on a clear path to the middle class. These programs help workers advance their skills while earning a living and a credential. Nationally, workers who complete apprenticeships earn an average \$60,000 and a lifetime gain of \$300,000 over their peers.<sup>vii</sup> On the employer-side, manufacturers and other businesses benefit from a pipeline of skilled workers, increased productivity, and reduced turnover.<sup>viii</sup>

Georgia has registered apprenticeship programs through partnerships with the Technical College System of Georgia, trade unions, U.S. Department of Labor, and employers; however, we need more programs across the state and better connections across systems so more Georgia workers and employers can benefit. Right next door, South Carolina has 7 times more apprenticeship programs than we do and serves 9,500 more workers.

	GA	SC
Active Apprentices	8,109	17,609
New Apprentices	3,277	12,012
Active Programs	132	964

Source: FY 2017 US DOL, [https://doleta.gov/oa/data\\_statistics.cfm](https://doleta.gov/oa/data_statistics.cfm)

As governor, Abrams will:

- **Produce 22,000 Active Apprentices by 2022.** We will reach this goal through additional coordinators in our technical colleges, expansion into more occupations and industries, outreach to military veterans transitioning from service to career, inclusion of more small businesses, and greater collaboration with federal agencies, employers, and trade unions.



- **Create a Skills Cabinet.** Abrams will appoint a Skills Cabinet to align skill-building goals and strategies across state agencies. The Cabinet will include a seat at the table for partners in education, labor, business, local government, and economic and workforce development.

Additional priorities for skills development and removal of barriers are:

- **Debt-Free Graduation.** Abrams will open pathways to [debt-free graduation](#) at every skill level through tuition-free technical certificates, need-based financial aid, service cancellable loans, and interventions to help students keep HOPE.
- **Youth Employment.** Abrams will promote a robust summer jobs program spearheaded by the [Governor's Youth Council](#).
- **Soft Skills Training.** Abrams will support [adult literacy, employability skills training, and Employment First strategies](#) to bridge the basic skills divide.
- **Support Veteran Employment.** Abrams will spearhead programs that offer better transitions from service to education and career for [veterans and military service members](#).
- **Support Reentry Programs for the Formerly Incarcerated.** Abrams will build upon her efforts with Governor Deal to support [programs](#) that help the formerly incarcerated transition back to their communities, reducing recidivism.

#### 4. Local Jobs and Local Products

Collaboration among Georgia education, health, and agriculture agencies brought us the 2020 Vision for School Nutrition—an effort to make 20% of school meals from Georgia products by 2020. We need to bring this mindset to more public projects. When we rely on Georgia businesses and Georgia workers, we can keep more dollars flowing in our local economies and into Georgians' pocketbooks.

As governor, Abrams will explore ways that public projects and contracts can be more supportive of Georgia workers and local products.

#### 5. Open and Inclusive State

We must put an end to job-killing, discriminatory legislation and ensure all workers and businesses know they are welcome in Georgia. A fair and diverse economy for all means full inclusion. Georgia has recruited corporate headquarters and built a film industry that is the envy of other states, but we threaten that economic growth when leaders push discrimination.

As governor, Abrams will:



- **Oppose Discriminatory Legislation.** Abrams will stand firm against RFRA and other discriminatory legislation. She will push for comprehensive civil rights legislation that addresses employment, housing, and public accommodations and includes protections on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.
- **Advance Protections for Workers Against Harassment.** Abrams will reform the Georgia Commission on Equal Opportunity into the Georgia Commission on Human Rights. This restructured commission will have the ability to set clear pathways for harassment complaints, be a referral point for Georgia workers, and oversee mediation or investigations into harassment for those workers who do not fall under federal purview.
- **Build Inclusive Boards and Commissions.** Abrams will ensure strong worker perspectives on the State Workforce Development Board and State Board of Workers' Compensation.

### Jobs Across Industries

As described in other platforms, Georgia can grow jobs across industry sectors and improve our reputation as a great place to work.

- **Health Care:** Expand Medicaid to create more than 50,000 new jobs and invest in biotech industries.
- **Military:** Protect our military bases from closure through creation of a Military Council, investment in infrastructure, and coordination with military and local leaders to prevent encroachment.
- **Education:** Push for smaller class sizes and more teachers in our K-12 system.
- **Research:** Support the Georgia Research Alliance and our institutions of higher education as they generate ground-breaking research and innovations that spur job growth across industries.
- **Arts:** Grow the arts, film, and music industries through small business investments, public funding for the arts, and protection of tax credits.
- **Georgia's Leading Industries:** Continue our international leadership in agriculture, financial technology, cybersecurity, and more through strong infrastructure, talented workforce, and targeted investments.

### Georgia as the No. 1 Place to Work

Georgia leaders often tout our status as the Number One place to do business. Georgia must strive to be the Number One place to work as well. The key to that is family-supporting wages and incomes, fair treatment, and affordable child care and health insurance. Abrams will support the creation of a Georgia Earned Income Tax Credit, a raise in the minimum wage, robust equal pay and anti-discrimination protections, historic investment in child care, and the expansion of Medicaid.

[Find out more about these plans here.](#)

### Stacey Abrams' Record

- Small business owner & entrepreneur
- Co-founder of NowAccount, a financial services company that has helped 350 small businesses in Georgia create and save thousands of jobs.



- Spearheaded efforts in the development, investment and consulting for complex infrastructure projects, including transportation, energy, facilities and water
- Eased administrative processes by co-sponsoring Streamlined Sales Tax legislation and Tax Court legislation
- Received an “A” rating from the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the AFL-CIO “Friend of Labor Award”
- Supported tax credits to grow jobs in emerging industries
- Fought discriminatory, job-killing legislation

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<sup>i</sup> “Georgia small businesses employed 1.5 million people, or 44.0% of the private workforce, in 2013.”

<https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/advocacy/Georgia.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> out of 25 in new venture creation [https://www.kauffman.org/kauffman-](https://www.kauffman.org/kauffman-index/profile?loc=13&name=georgia&breakdowns=growth%7Coverall,startup-activity%7Coverall,main-street%7Coverall)

[index/profile?loc=13&name=georgia&breakdowns=growth%7Coverall,startup-activity%7Coverall,main-street%7Coverall](https://www.kauffman.org/kauffman-index/profile?loc=13&name=georgia&breakdowns=growth%7Coverall,startup-activity%7Coverall,main-street%7Coverall)

<sup>iii</sup> 22<sup>nd</sup> out of 25 in established small business activity [https://www.kauffman.org/kauffman-](https://www.kauffman.org/kauffman-index/profile?loc=13&name=georgia&breakdowns=growth%7Coverall,startup-activity%7Coverall,main-street%7Coverall)

[index/profile?loc=13&name=georgia&breakdowns=growth%7Coverall,startup-activity%7Coverall,main-street%7Coverall](https://www.kauffman.org/kauffman-index/profile?loc=13&name=georgia&breakdowns=growth%7Coverall,startup-activity%7Coverall,main-street%7Coverall)

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/research/expanding-opportunity-through-infrastructure-jobs/>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/pubs/impacts/> and

<https://www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/Economic-Impact-Public-Transportation-Investment-APTA.pdf>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://cviog.uga.edu/news/032318-rural.html>

<sup>vii</sup> [http://www.georgia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Breakout-Set-2\\_Utilizing-Georgia-WorkSmart-Registered-Apprenticeships-in-Sector-Partnerships.pdf](http://www.georgia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Breakout-Set-2_Utilizing-Georgia-WorkSmart-Registered-Apprenticeships-in-Sector-Partnerships.pdf)

<sup>viii</sup> [http://www.georgia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Breakout-Set-2\\_Utilizing-Georgia-WorkSmart-Registered-Apprenticeships-in-Sector-Partnerships.pdf](http://www.georgia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Breakout-Set-2_Utilizing-Georgia-WorkSmart-Registered-Apprenticeships-in-Sector-Partnerships.pdf)