



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Georgia has over 124,000 Immigrant-Owned Businesses. Support Hasn't Kept Pace

LCF Georgia Releases First-Ever Statewide Immigrant Business Study And a Playbook Built for Action

ATLANTA, GA — July 23, 2026 —One in five of Georgia entrepreneurs are immigrants*. These entrepreneurs anchor commercial corridors, generate jobs, and contribute billions to the state's economy. The Latino Community Fund Georgia (LCF Georgia), along with local partners, is releasing the state's first-ever comprehensive Immigrant Business Needs Assessment and companion Business Playbook, the result of a two-year research initiative supported by the JPMorgan Chase Foundation. The process included a statewide survey conducted in 16 languages, focus groups in Buford Highway and Clarkston, and one-on-one interviews with cities, Economic Development Offices, and a deep review of publicly available data from Business Serving Organizations and CDFI's. The findings are clear: the opportunity is enormous, the barriers are structural, and the window to act is now.

What the data says

- **Immigrant-owned businesses operate in community-facing sectors, acting as economic and social anchors.** There are more than 124,000 immigrant-owned businesses across Georgia.
- **Informality is transitional rather than preferred.** 33.3% are unsure how to formally register their business. 26.8% lack funding to do it.
- **Retaining employees is a growing challenge as businesses scale.**
- **The Buford Highway corridor is both a hub for immigrant entrepreneurship and a zone of heightened vulnerability.** 75.6% of businesses surveyed along Buford Highway report rising commercial rents that threaten their long-term stability. This is not a reality exclusive to Buford Highway.
- **0 of 8** local governments and economic development entities evaluated have formal anti-displacement policies specifically designed to protect immigrant-owned businesses.

The gap between immigrant entrepreneurship and institutional support isn't just an equity issue. It is a Georgia economic development failure.

The full report includes three interconnected tools:

- Needs Assessment, Statewide survey findings, and actionable recommendations.

*Sources:

<https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/georgia/>

<https://americasvoice.org/uncategorized/reality-check-immigrants-are-essential-to-georgia/>



- Anti-Displacement Policy Audit, Focused on Buford Highway and Clarkston commercial corridors.
- CDFI & Business-Serving Organization Landscape Analysis, Mapping who exists, who is missing, and where to invest, focused in DeKalb and Gwinnett counties.

A companion Business Playbook is also available for immediate download as a practical, implementation-ready guide designed for local governments, economic development agencies, lenders, and community organizations.

Priority areas identified include:

- Removing barriers to business formalization
- Equitable Business Improvement Districts that build wealth, not displacement
- Hands-on, demonstration-based technical assistance
- Physical preservation of commercial space through developer incentives
- Purchasing reform
- Trusted community organizations as business navigators
- Visual, multilingual permitting guides
- Intentional multilingual staffing across economic development offices

A pilot financial product purpose-built for immigrant business owners will also be announced at the launch event.

"Over 124,000 entrepreneurs are not waiting for permission to build; they have been building, hiring, and investing in their neighborhoods, holding up entire corridors and local economies vibrant and dynamic. Georgia cannot call itself open for business without the intentional exclusion of the international entrepreneurial community. This study gives every city, every lender, and every economic development office in Georgia exactly what they need to show up as #1 for ALL businesses and a true global gateway."

Gigi Pedraza, Executive Director, Latino Community Fund Georgia

Media Event / Join the Launch

What: Unveiling Findings: Immigrant-Owned Needs Assessment & Recommendations. A presentation of original research.

When: Thursday, August 6, 2026 | 3:00–5:00 p.m.

Where: Brookhaven City Center, 4001 Peachtree Road NE, Brookhaven, GA 30319

Reporters will have opportunities to interview immigrant business owners, researchers, and policy experts, receive advance access to the findings, and learn how local governments can



implement the report's recommendations. The full playbook and reports will be publicly released following the event.

This study was made possible with key trusted partner organizations: **We Love Buford Highway, Prospera, the Latin American Association, and Refugee Women Network.** Survey, analysis, and design provided by **Neighborhood Nexus.**

About Latino Community Fund Georgia

LCF Georgia is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a membership of 23 Latino community groups across Georgia. Together, the groups work and invest to accelerate positive change in Georgia through advancing democracy, building community, and expanding economic opportunity. We are committed to help build a Georgia which is both the premier place to do business, work, study, raise families, and thrive.

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