

## A Letter to HEAT Donors – From Emily



Dear HEAT donors,

My name is Emily Hamilton and I want to share what your generosity means to me and my three little girls. Your kindness reached my family when we were holding on by a thread.

Not long ago, my daughters and I escaped a domestic violence situation. We left with just the clothes we could carry and the

hope of finding safety somehow. For months, we had no stable place to sleep. I was so relieved when I finally found a job and a small two-bedroom apartment. My girls had their own beds and we finally felt like we were starting over.

But even when I thought I was doing everything right, our life still fell apart.

Electrical problems in our apartment caused the power bill to jump to more than \$650 a month. As a single mother paying for rent, utilities, childcare, food and transportation, I just couldn't keep up.

Our situation got worse when the electricity was shut off and then the gas a few days later.

I will never forget how scared my daughters looked when the lights and heat went out. They asked me when the heat would come back, when the lights would turn on again, when things would be okay. I did my best to protect them by wrapping them

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## Message From the Executive Director

Dear friends of HEAT,

Across Georgia, families are facing an energy affordability crisis unlike anything we have seen in recent years. Over the past five years, HEAT has experienced a sharp increase in the number of households seeking help with heating bills. Our team reached record-high requests for energy assistance in 2025, resulting in nearly 2,000 Georgia households receiving HEAT funds to keep their homes warm and lights on.

According to our recipients, this surge in energy assistance requests is driven by a combination of economic and policy pressures. Rising unemployment, increasing costs of goods and services as well as reductions in support for critical federal programs such as SNAP, Medicaid and Affordable Care Act subsidies place excessive strain on low- and moderate-income households. As these pressures intensify, more Georgians are turning to HEAT because they have nowhere else to go.

This moment presents both challenges and opportunities for our organization. The challenge is clear: the demand for energy assistance is outpacing resources. But the opportunity is equally impactful. HEAT has always been strongest when individuals like you as well as corporations and our utility company partners come together to protect Georgia's most vulnerable residents.



Today, I ask for your renewed support. Whether through an individual gift or corporate partnership, your contribution prevents the disconnection of heating service that people depend on for daily home life, including children who are managing schoolwork and seniors who are coping with health issues.

Before closing, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our long-standing donors and partners who have supported HEAT through shifting economic conditions and policy landscapes. Your generosity has kept families, children and seniors warm and secure in their homes year after year. We could not do this work without you.

As we look ahead, HEAT remains grounded in the belief that partnership is essential to our mission. Together, we will meet the moment with compassion, determination and hope.

With my deepest gratitude,

Nichelle A. Mitchem Adamson, JD  
Executive Director

# Georgia's Energy Assistance Needs Are Surging—And HEAT Continues to Step Up

The dramatic upswing in energy insecurity for Georgia has put HEAT on the front lines of this crisis. **While last year HEAT served the highest number of households in our organization's history, 2026 is unfortunately on track to surpass that record.** The community action agencies that help distribute our funds statewide report unprecedented volumes of energy assistance applications as more families and individuals fall behind on utility bills.

Thousands of Georgians are disconnected from heating service for their basic necessities or are at risk due to factors beyond their control such as job loss, stagnant wages, chronic illness and government policy changes.

## Policy Shifts: Relief and Setbacks

**The recent passage of additional federal funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is an important acknowledgment by Congress that energy insecurity is still a national-level priority.** While LIHEAP remains a lifeline for our neighbors struggling to keep their heat on, the program's life-changing impact is constrained by the broader impacts of the Big Beautiful Bill Act that have reduced or eliminated critical support for federal safety-net programs. In the aftermath of this policy, we see:

- States nationwide report record-high numbers for energy assistance applications
- Rising utility costs and numbers of households in need far exceed available resources
- Many eligible households receive only partial assistance when approved
- Waiting lists for assistance continue to grow

## Where HEAT Fits In

For organizations like HEAT, this moment is both urgent and defining. We are uniquely positioned to help fill the gaps for energy assistance left by federal and state programs but doing so requires strong community support from people like you. Every donation—whether from an individual, a foundation or a corporate partner—directly helps a Georgia household avoid disconnection or restore service to maintain stability during difficult times.

## A Call to Action

As the need for energy assistance grows notably, so must our response. Our team remains committed to ensuring that no Georgian—especially seniors, single parents and disabled individuals—loses access to heating service for needs such as a warm home, cooking meals and a hot shower. **We invite you to join us in raising funds for our statewide safety net by donating to HEAT today.** Thank you for being part of this journey to turn rising needs into rising compassion. 🔥

## HEAT Welcomes New Team Member

Progressing HEAT's impact in energy assistance requires adding team members with diverse experience, well-developed skills and a heart of service. We happily welcome Danielle Scudder who reflects these values and joins our team as the program and operations manager.

Born in Savannah, Georgia, Danielle's innate curiosity about people has significantly shaped her life, including earning her bachelor's degree in anthropology from Georgia Southern University and a master's degree in social science. Learning about structural violence and oppression inspired Danielle to pursue nonprofit work after graduation, starting with joining AmeriCorps and serving Share Our Strength. Through AmeriCorps, she implemented a high school breakfast program through the No Kid Hungry campaign on the Fort Peck American Indian Reservation in Poplar, Montana. Her most memorable experience helping people in need is living



on Fort Peck alongside tribal members as an AmeriCorps VISTA member. She saw firsthand the impacts of their generations-long struggles with poverty (lack of transportation, healthy food, etc.) and restoring their weakened pre-colonial traditions, which were caused by physical and cultural genocide.

After returning to Georgia, Danielle worked with HealthMPowers by implementing alternative breakfast programs in schools and supporting these schools through Share Our Strength grants. She later became the multimedia designer, handling needs for IT, design, photos, videos, newsletters, social media and online platform management.

Now as part of HEAT, Danielle manages the energy assistance program (application process, fund distribution, etc.) and helps develop donor relationships, fundraisers and volunteer

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### Donate to HEAT. Many individuals need your help today.

Donate online at [heatga.org](https://heatga.org) or complete this form and mail it with your check to the address below.

*A donation of \$350 helps one deserving family pay their utility bill. However, donations of any amount are needed and appreciated.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Home Heating Energy Provider \_\_\_\_\_

**HEAT, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 849  
Smyrna, GA 30081



# Helping Meet the Need: Atlanta Community Food Bank

Far too many people grapple with circumstances such as unemployment, underemployment and high cost of living that not only leave them vulnerable to the disconnection of their heating service but also to food insecurity. According to the USDA Economic Research Service, food insecurity is “a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.” With one in seven Georgians living in this condition, improving access to nutritious food for our neighbors is an enormous endeavor. Atlanta Community Food Bank (the Food Bank) is a long-standing nonprofit that helps meet this need.

As the largest nonprofit food bank in Georgia and the fourth largest food bank in the country, Atlanta Community Food Bank serves metro Atlanta and north Georgia by distributing food and goods from donors to feed people in 29 counties.

Community kitchens, food pantries, childcare centers, shelters and senior centers are among the more than 700 community-based nonprofit partners in the Food Bank's network that place orders and directly provide food to struggling families and individuals.

One financial hardship such as job loss, health issues or car trouble can take a household from staying afloat to plunging into a crisis where people do not know when they can afford their next meal. Systemic barriers such as unsafe neighborhoods, lack of public transportation and under-resourced schools are another layer of hardship that worsens access to nutritious food for a healthy life. The Atlanta Community Food Bank's mission to fight hunger for our neighbors in need has resulted in the distribution of millions of meals each month.

Georgians facing hard times have three options for help through the Food Bank.

- **Nearest food pantry:** Visit [acfb.org/get-help/food-map](https://acfb.org/get-help/food-map) for an interactive map or text FINDFOOD (COMIDA for Spanish) to 888-976-2232.
- **Community Food Center appointment:** Call 478-394-4547 or text FOOD to either 404-474-0578 for Atlanta, 404-334-5653 for Marietta, 404-994-3482 for Jonesboro or 678-884-4564 for Stone Mountain.
- **Government assistance appointment:** Visit [acfb.org/get-help/benefits](https://acfb.org/get-help/benefits) or call 678-553-5917.

*Source: “Food Security in the U.S. - Definitions of Food Security.” USDA Economic Research Service, updated February 18, 2026, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security>. Accessed March 2026.*

*Source: “Georgia.” Feeding America, <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/georgia>. Accessed March 2026.*

*Source: “What is Food Insecurity?” Feeding America, <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/food-insecurity>. Accessed March 2026.*

## Did You Know About These Community Resources for Housing and Home Maintenance?

Securing a home can change someone's life by giving them access to the safety, independence, resources and relationships they need to thrive, yet thousands of Georgians endure a different reality. Here are three nonprofits dedicated to minimizing how long and often people in our communities lose their housing or are at risk.

### Nicholas House

Started in 1982 by members of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church to address the lack of homeless shelters offering multi-night stays and long-term assistance, Nicholas House now serves around 250 family members every night. Families facing homelessness in Atlanta and surrounding areas can receive help becoming self-sufficient through emergency shelter, rental assistance, rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention. A unique aspect of Nicholas House is that services are available to any family makeup—single parent, two parents, grandparents, siblings, etc.

**Website:** [nicholashouse.org](https://nicholashouse.org)

**Phone Number:** 404-622-0793

### Another Chance of Atlanta

Another Chance of Atlanta helps homeless veterans, families and individuals in Fulton, Clayton and Gwinnett counties. People in need can receive temporary housing, permanent housing, rental assistance, short-term hotel/motel stays, employment support (from resumes to interviews), food pantry access and other support services (healthcare, mental health, goal planning, etc.).

**Website:** [anotherchanceofatlanta.org](https://anotherchanceofatlanta.org)

**Phone Number:** 678-974-5989

### House Proud Atlanta

Focusing on legacy homeowners, House Proud Atlanta provides low-income seniors and veterans in Atlanta (and Birmingham, Alabama) with no-cost home repairs to help them remain in the houses they worked hard for. The organization keeps homes warm, safe and dry through services for these needs: heating and cooling systems, energy efficiency, minor electrical issues, exterior handrails, steps and porches, rotted wood, fascia and soffit for roofing, plumbing leaks and ADA-compliant grab bars.

**Website:** [houseproudatl.org](https://houseproudatl.org)

**Phone Number:** 404-477-4549



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*Helping low-income  
Georgians meet their energy needs*

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in blankets and trying to be strong even though I felt like I was failing them. We already survived homelessness once. I couldn't let my girls go through that again.

I didn't know where we would get help from until I found out about HEAT. Generous people like you made it possible for us to have a warm home again. You didn't just pay our heating bill. You gave us safety, dignity and hope during a dark time. You helped my three little girls sleep in a warm room.

I was terrified of going back to losing everything. Your donations gave me the chance to keep our home, keep my job and keep my family together when HEAT stepped in. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for changing the direction of our lives.

With deep gratitude,  
Emily

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engagement. She is excited to design new, creative campaigns and attend events to increase our outreach and funding. Danielle believes HEAT's mission is important for Georgia because our neighbors' quality of life diminishes when they are unable to stay warm in their homes and heat water for needs such as cooking and bathing. She says, "With the number of Georgians living in poverty and housing costs only increasing, HEAT's work is needed now more than ever." 🔥

*The HEAT Factor is a newsletter published for  
friends and supporters of HEAT, Inc.*

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HEAT, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) statewide nonprofit organization that raises funds to help Georgians who need temporary financial assistance with energy bills. Thousands of households need help, but only limited funding is available.

*Our mission is to provide energy  
assistance for Georgians in need.*



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