

# Desert Mapping and Intervention Act of 2024

## I. Title:

### Georgia Desert Mapping and Intervention Act of 2024

## II. Purpose:

The purpose of this Act is to:

1. Establish the "Desert Mapping and Intervention Initiative" within the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).
2. Identify, analyze, and address regions within Georgia that lack essential resources and services, referred to as "deserts."
3. Ensure equitable access to vital amenities for all Georgia residents.
4. Centralize and coordinate efforts for data collection, research, planning, and interventions related to various types of "deserts."

## III. Definitions:

1. **Deserts:** Regions or areas that lack essential resources and services, which may include but are not limited to, healthcare, nutritious food, credit facilities, affordable housing, internet connectivity, and transportation.
2. **ODMI:** Office of Desert Mapping and Intervention, a central unit established within the DCA.

## IV. Provisions:

1. **Establishment of the Office of Desert Mapping and Intervention (ODMI):**
  - Housed within the DCA, the ODMI will serve as the central coordinating entity for all desert-related activities.
  - Responsibilities: Data collection, research, planning associated with each type of desert, spearheading initiatives to address these gaps in collaboration with other state agencies.
2. **Collaboration Mechanisms:**
  - **Health Service Deserts:** Collaborate with the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) to address regions with limited healthcare facilities.
  - **Food Deserts:** Partner with the Georgia Department of Agriculture to address areas with limited access to nutritious foods.
  - **Credit Deserts:** Work in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Banking and Finance to address areas lacking adequate banking and credit facilities.
  - **Housing Deserts:** Lead initiatives to identify and address areas lacking affordable housing solutions.

- **Digital and Broadband Deserts:** Collaborate with the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) to address regions with inadequate internet access.
- **Transportation Deserts:** Engage with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to discuss solutions for regions lacking proper transportation.

### 3. **Implementation & Continuous Improvement:**

- Regular data analysis to monitor progress and challenges.
- Community feedback mechanisms to ensure public participation and representation.
- Annual report, prepared by the ODMI in conjunction with all collaborating departments, highlighting progress, challenges, and future plans.

### **V. Enforcement:**

The DCA, in collaboration with the respective state agencies, shall enforce the provisions of this Act. The DCA shall also allocate necessary resources, both financial and human, to ensure the effective functioning of the ODMI.

### **VI. Amendments to Existing Laws:**

Any law, rule, or regulation inconsistent with the provisions of this Act shall be deemed amended to the extent of the inconsistency.

### **VII. Scope:**

This Act shall cover the entirety of the state of Georgia, ensuring no resident is left behind in accessing essential resources and services.

### **VIII. Conclusion:**

By centralizing efforts and fostering inter-departmental collaborations, this Act aims to comprehensively address and alleviate the challenges posed by various "deserts" within Georgia, ensuring a better quality of life for all its residents.