



**FULTON
COUNTY**



ADA 35 COMMEMORATIVE SOUVENIR BOOKLET

**July 24, 2025
10 AM - 1 PM
Fulton County Government Center
Atrium**





FULTON COUNTY

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Acknowledgements

The ADA35 Rally Steering Committee extends its heartfelt appreciation to the Fulton County Department of External Affairs for its outstanding contributions to the ADA35 Rally.

Their team played a vital role in creating the visual identity of the event, including the design of the official ADA35 logo. In addition, they developed and produced printed materials and crafted engaging social media publications that helped amplify the rally's message and broaden its reach.

Beyond their creative and technical support, the Department of External Affairs demonstrated a strong commitment to accessibility for all—ensuring that every element of their work reflected the values at the heart of the ADA. Their thoughtful approach helped to make this event more inclusive, impactful, and welcoming to all members of the community.

The Steering Committee is proud to recognize its partnership and is deeply grateful for its role in making this milestone celebration a meaningful success.



*Published by the **Fulton County Department of Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance (DCRC)***

Content created by **Amya Rowe**, Administrative Specialist, DCRC

Disclaimer: The content of this publication is for informational and resource purposes only. It does not constitute an endorsement or referral of services that have been vetted by Fulton County Government. Users are encouraged to conduct their own research and seek professional advice as needed.

Fulton County Vision ~

Fulton County is a positive, diverse community with a thriving economy, safe neighborhoods, healthy residents, and a rich quality of life that all people can enjoy. It is served by a county government that is recognized for being innovative, effective, efficient, and trustworthy.



~ Fulton County Mission

“To deliver efficient, high-impact service to every resident and visitor of Fulton County.”

HISTORY OF THE ADA

July 26, 2025, marks the 35th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This groundbreaking legislation was signed into law on July 26, 1990, and has positively affected many aspects of daily life for people with disabilities. The ADA added disability as a protected civil rights category—one that, unlike race or national origin, anyone could join at any time during their lives.



Meaningful advancements in disability awareness and inclusion require more than mere solidarity. Actual progress requires action and an unceasing desire to explore all possibilities. The ADA has opened many doors for individuals to participate in everyday life, including visiting public spaces, recreation, and employment. At Fulton County, we continually assess our programs and public spaces to ensure they are accessible to all abilities. Through the Reasonable Accommodation process guaranteed by the ADA, individuals with disabilities can request alterations in rules, policies, practices, or physical spaces necessary because of their disability to ensure they can have an equal opportunity to enjoy the same benefits of society. Our Reasonable Accommodation process is open for employees with disabilities to utilize to keep them successful in their positions.



On April 15, 1992, the Fulton County Commission on Disability Affairs (CODA) was established by a Resolution of the Board of Commissioners to identify and review factors in Fulton County that most directly affect the quality of life for persons with disabilities. CODA provides information to the Board of Commissioners, the Department of Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance (DCRC), and the community in general in meeting the mandates of state and federal laws relating to persons with disabilities.

In celebration of the 35th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Fulton County Department of Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance (DCRC), in collaboration with the Fulton County Commission on Disability Affairs (CODA), recognized the milestone by hosting a resource expo and rally, with the acceptance of a proclamation on July 9, 2025, ahead of the July 26th national celebration.

Helpful Links

View more information on the [Department of Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance](#).

For more information on the Commission on Disability Affairs, [Click Here](#)

To learn more about the Americans with Disabilities Act, its protections, and related guidance, visit the [ADA National Network](#), [the Southeast ADA Center](#), or the [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#).



ADA Proclamation



On July 9, 2025, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners issued a proclamation in recognition of the 35th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The proclamation expressed continued support of the invaluable advocacy and continued efforts by the Department of Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance and the Commission on Disability Affairs to improve the quality of life for citizens who have disabilities, and it proclaimed Wednesday, July 9, 2025, as “Disability Awareness Day.”

The proclamation was sponsored by Commissioner Bridget Thorne and Commissioner Dana Barrett with full Board support.



Board of Commissioners



Robb Pitts
*Chairman
At-Large*



Bridget Thorne

District 1



Bob Ellis
*Vice Chairman
District 2*



Dana Barrett

District 3



Mo Ivory

District 4



**Marvin S.
Arrington, Jr.**

District 5



**Khadijah
Abdur-Rahman**

District 6

Guiding the Vision: A Note from our County Manager



Dick Anderson

OFFICE OF THE FULTON COUNTY MANAGER
Fulton County Government Center

141 Pryor Street, SW, Suite 10061
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Telephone: 404-612-8320
Facsimile: 404-612-2184



On July 24, 2025, we recognized and celebrated the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) 35th Year Anniversary! This milestone accomplishment marks our Nation and the County's steadfast commitment to the prohibition of discrimination based on disabilities in the workplace. The ADA law changed how disabled individuals are treated in the workforce while ensuring that people with disabilities are treated fairly and equally. Though this law has faced many challenges, it has helped shape the progress of an inclusive County and the entire Country.

This 35th Year Anniversary was special for Fulton County as the Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance (DCRC) Department launched its 1st Annual ADA Rally. During the Rally, I witnessed firsthand, citizens, employees, and those with disabilities come together for a festive and fun-filled experience. Seeing this level of engagement without prejudice, preferences, and preconceived notions that can sometimes lead to unfairness or partiality made me proud.

The County's unwavering commitment to ensure that those with disabilities have the same access, rights, and opportunities as others is unmatched. As County Manager, I would like to thank those who attended the 1st ADA Rally, and I welcome and encourage everyone to join us next year. This iconic celebration has proved that "WE" can accomplish anything when we work "TOGETHER". We accomplished what may have appeared to have been impossible to ensure the event was a huge success. Yes, "WE" made it possible "TOGETHER"!

Inclusively Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Anderson".

Dick Anderson
County Manager

DCRC Steering Committee



Melissa Cuthrell
Director



Darrick Carr
*ADA
Administrator*



Maleka Rahman
*Executive
Assistant*



**William "Ollie"
Ligon**
*DCRC
Officer II*



Amya Rowe
*Administrative
Specialist*



Donna Bates
*Administrative
Coordinator I*



Gloria Eslick
*Administrative
Assistant II*

Leadership in Action:

Words from Director Melissa Cuthrell



Department of Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance
141 Pryor Street, S. W., Room #5042
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
(404) 612-7305



July 26, 2025

In celebration of the 35th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and as a reflection of our ongoing commitment to ensure access to our facilities, services, and programs, the Department of Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance (DCRC) hosted its 1st Annual ADA Rally. This event brought in nearly 500 citizens, volunteers, community partners, vendors, disability rights advocates, and members of our workforce to honor this landmark legislation, which established a critical foundation for accessibility and inclusion for millions of individuals living with disabilities.

Disability is a natural part of the human experience – one that in no way diminishes a person's right to live independently, exercise self-determination, make choices, and contribute fully to society. The ADA is more than a law; it is a promise of inclusion, dignity, and equal opportunity.

We recognize the immense value and potential of individuals with disabilities and remain firmly committed to advancing access, eliminating barriers, and promoting full inclusion within county government and the broader community.

Thank you for joining us in recognizing this important milestone. Together, we reaffirm our dedication to building a more accessible, equitable, and inclusive future for all.

Yours for Equal Opportunity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Cuthrell". The script is elegant and cursive.

Director
Fulton County Department of
Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance

Commission on Disability Affairs Board Members



Vernitia Shannon
Chairman



Tina Aldridge



Jeannie Comlish



Michael Hopkins



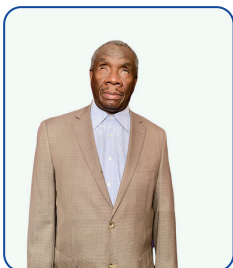
Tais Keyser



Dr. Tara Miller



Rometta Powell



Robert Smith



Derrick Tuff



Gloria Weaver

More than 30 years ago, Fulton County leaders recognized that people with disabilities were facing numerous unfair barriers. In 1990, they passed a resolution to examine these challenges and identify solutions. In 1992, a group of experts made two key recommendations: establish a Department of Disability Affairs and create the Commission on Disability Affairs (CODA).

CODA was formed to advocate for people with disabilities and to collaborate with the County to ensure that programs, services, facilities, and employment opportunities are accessible and inclusive.

Since its founding, CODA has worked alongside local leaders and community partners to help make Fulton County a better place for all residents. People with disabilities deserve a County that values their contributions and supports their ability to live strong, independent lives.

Meet our Chairman

Attorney Vernitia Shannon, CODA Chairman

After practicing law for 15+ years and public service in positions including the Campaign Director for a candidate in the Lieutenant Governor race in Virginia, Attorney Shannon experienced a serious injury that caused an acquired disability. Consequently, she was required to use a wheelchair for mobility.

Soon, she learned that exercising the right to equal access to facilities and services gives persons with disabilities choices to participate in their community to their best ability. She observed that providing accessibility was an effective way to give freedom to everyone by eradicating the social biases against persons with disabilities.

In response, Attorney Shannon founded a disability advocacy organization with a mission to educate, activate, advocate, and collaborate with others to empower Georgians to live fully and accessibly in all aspects of life.

Get Involved!

CODA Board meetings are held every other month on the third Wednesday of the month at 6:00 PM. Meetings are held via Zoom.

Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/93768918772>

Event Program



Introduction of Emcee

Darrick Carr, ADA Administrator, DCRC

Welcome

Dr. Yvette Pegues

Commission on Disability Affairs (CODA)

Recognition

Melissa Cuthrell, DCRC Director

Recognition of Diversity & Civil Rights Team and Vendor Participants

Dr. Yvette Pegues

Talent Segment presented by SHOWAbility Inc.

Myrna Clayton – SHOWAbility Inc.

County Welcome Message

Richard “Dick” Anderson

Fulton County Manager

Open Networking and Vendor Interaction

Closing

Melissa Cuthrell, DCRC Director



The Voice of the Rally

Dr. Yvette Pegues



Dr. Yvette Pegues is a nationally recognized disability advocate, accessibility innovator, and the first woman of color to hold a national wheelchair pageant title. Fulton County recognized her with the "Barham Disability Champion" award during her reign as Ms. Wheelchair USA and Ms. Wheelchair International, "for contributions increasing access and inclusion for persons with disabilities".

After suffering a traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, Dr. Pegues went from being unable to walk, talk, or work to co-founding multiple organizations. Your Invisible DisAbility Group's mission is to empower, equip, educate, and include people with disabilities. Dream-Write-Hope University is a 501c3 organization offering financial literacy training and scholarships for both STEM and disabled post-secondary students.

Her dedication to helping individuals of all abilities turn adversity into advocacy is reflected in chairing the ADA Committee at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, community organizing, and serving on multiple national advocacy boards. She continues to consult with public and private institutions to provide subject matter expertise. She is featured on national platforms for her groundbreaking work in inclusive innovation, adaptive technology, and AI ethics from the lens of a disabled engineer.

Whether at IBM, the White House, in the boardroom, on the stage, participating in over 20 adapted sports, or in the community, Dr. Pegues empowers others to lead with purpose, power, and possibility.



ACCESSIBILITY FORWARD

Where Passion Meets Purpose!



PERFORMANCES THAT INSPIRED



On behalf of the organizers of the ADA 35 Rally, we want to extend our heartfelt thank you to **SHOWAbility** and the creative, talented, and outstanding performers.

- Inclusive Chorus
- Monologue by Bridgette Suttle
- Poem by Christy Priester
- Question ATL
- The SOOP Orchestra
- Unlimited Models





Advancing Accessibility for All



Thank You to Our Volunteers!

To our incredible volunteers—thank you for your time, energy, and unwavering dedication to the success of the ADA 35 Rally. Your efforts behind the scenes and on the front lines helped create a welcoming, inclusive, and impactful event.

We truly couldn't have done it without you. Your commitment embodies the spirit of the ADA and the power of community.

Fulton County Departments & Agencies

- Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities
- Community Development
- Cooperative Extension
- Customer Service & Solutions
- External Affairs
- FGTV (Arts & Culture)
- Fulton County Police
- Fulton County Sheriff's Office
- Human Resources Management
- Library
- Office of the County Manager
- Public Works
- Real Estate & Asset Management

Event Volunteers

- Justin Battle
- Coretta Bell
- Latasha Cordell
- Alan-Michael Cuthrell
- Ryan Cuthrell
- Matthew Flournoy
- Alyssa Lee
- Mary Melvin
- Norman Reid
- Dr. Angela Richardson-Bryant
- Jerry Reynolds
- Rosemary Shedrick
- Joao Teixeira
- Carol Washington





Thank You, Vendors!

We extend our sincere gratitude to all of the vendors who supported and participated in the ADA 35 Rally. Your presence and partnership helped make this event a meaningful and memorable celebration of progress, inclusion, and community.

Production Vendors

Dr. Yvette Pegues - Your Invisible DisAbility Group

SHOWAbility

The SOS Agency

Fulton County External Affairs

Darryl Peek - IN THE MIX RADIO SHOW

Balloons over Atlanta

Resource Vendors

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention - Georgia Chapter

Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Inc.

Bobby Dodd Institute

Commission on Disability Affairs

COOP Extension

Disability: IN Greater Atlanta

DISABILITY LINK

Disability Resource Advisors

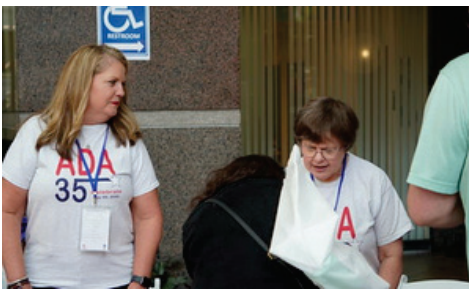
FODAC (Friends of Disabled Adults and Children)

Fulton County External Affairs

Fulton County Library System

Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities

Georgia Library Service for the Blind And Print Disabled



Resource Vendors, Cont'd

- Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
- Jevaram & Associates
- Laurel Heights Hospital
- Littkare, Ilc Speedpro Marietta
- MARTA
- Shepherd Center
- Southeast ADA Center / BBI
- The Jacobs Ladder Group
- The SOS Agency
- Tools for Life & CIDI - Georgia Tech
- Vocal Point (Georgia Radio Reading Service, Inc.)

Food Vendors

- Atlanta Seafood Company
- Carlyle's Catering
- Gyro Chef
- Rio's Italian Icy
- Wild Eyed Southern BBQ Company



VENDOR ADVERTISEMENTS



**ACCESSIBILITY MATTERS
IN FULTON COUNTY!**

Celebrating ADA35 & Disability Pride Month



Creating opportunities that empower performing artists across the disability spectrum (physical, mental, sensory, developmental, and intellectual impairments including select persons with behavioral health challenges) to share their talents, both within the disability community and the wider world across the Arts, Entertainment and Film Industries

EVERYBODY DESERVES A STAGE!



***SHOWAbility is always looking for talent!
Email your audition videos to info@showability.org***

The **SOS** Agency

ASL Interpreting & CART Services:

How To Book

Contact The SOS Agency!

- APPROVED VENDOR FOR STATE OF GEORGIA
- FAST RESPONSE TIME
- FRIENDLY STAFF
- QUALIFIED INTERPRETERS

SUBMIT A REQUEST IN ADVANCE:

EMAIL:

SCHEDULING@THESOSAGENCY.COM

PHONE: 866-414-3555

FAX: 770-952-6033

SUBMIT AN URGENT REQUEST AFTER HOURS:

CALL OR TEXT: 866-414-3555

Questions?



INFO@THESOSAGENCY.COM



866-414-3555 (CALL OR TEXT)



WWW.THESOSAGENCY.COM





**Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency is proud
to partner with Fulton County as we celebrate the
35th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act!**

**To learn more about GVRA,
visit gvs.ga.gov**





dis**ABILITY**
LINK
the center for rights & resources



**Jeyaram
& Associates**
Wills, Trusts & Estate Planning

GEORGIA'S LEADING SPECIAL NEEDS ATTORNEYS

Legal Services We Offer

- ▶ Special Needs Trusts
- ▶ Estate Planning
- ▶ Powers of Attorney
- ▶ Guardianship
- ▶ Conservatorship
- ▶ HIPAA Waviers
- ▶ Katie Beckett Denial Appeals
- ▶ NOW/COMP Denial Appeals



**"Protecting Special Needs Families
Is Our Mission"**

www.JeyLaw.com | 678-325-3872

Child & Adolescent Psychiatric Hospital

Acute Treatment Programs

- General Psychiatric Inpatient Program
- Specialty Autism Inpatient Program
- Boys & Girls, Ages 6 – 17

Residential Treatment Programs

- General Psychiatric Program
Boys & Girls, ages 12—17
- Specialty Autism Program
Boys, ages 8—17

All Residential Patients attend Laurel Heights Academy and acquire transferrable EDU credits



24 Hour Intake Line: 404-888-5475
934 Briarcliff Rd. NE, Atlanta, GA 30306





American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention

Georgia

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY

AFSP's mission is to save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide.

Our work is focused on prevention education, support for loss survivors, advocating for appropriate mental health policies, and funding prevention research.

Learn more about our
FREE programs and
resources!



SCAN NOW

Register and join us at
an upcoming event!



SCAN NOW

AFSP Georgia | 1920 Dresden Drive, #191591 Atlanta, GA 31119 | georgia@afsp.org



**Celebrate the 35th ADA
Anniversary with GLS by
becoming a library patron!**

Phone: 800-248-6701

Email: glg@georgialibraries.org

Web: glg.georgialibraries.org



ADA Celebration: Voices of the Blind and Low Vision

Vocal Point is Georgia's leading audio information service, providing inclusive, accessible content for individuals who are blind, low-vision, or print-impaired. Formerly known as Georgia Radio Reading Service (GaRRS), we're proud to continue our mission through digital programming, community partnerships, and innovative storytelling.

Our Services Include:

- Audio readings of newspapers, magazines, books, and vital public information
- Virtual and on-demand listening options
- Storytelling and mental health programming tailored to the blind community
- Volunteer and mentorship opportunities

Follow Us on Social Media to
Stay Connected!

Donate Today



www.seevp.org

info@seevp.org

[@seevocalpoint](https://www.instagram.com/seevocalpoint)



Friends of Disabled Adults and Children (FODAC) is a non-profit that provides over \$15 million annually in refurbished home medical equipment (HME) and services at little or no cost to the recipient.

Since 1986, our history of faith-based values inspire us to enhance the quality of life for people of all ages who have mobility limitations.

FODAC's programs save 450 tons of waste every year.



SERVICES AVAILABLE



REFURBISHED MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

- Manual and Power Wheelchairs
- Rollators & Walkers
- Scooters
- Bathroom aids
- Hospital beds
- Pediatric equipment
- Patient lifts



LIFT INSTALLATION

Donated lifts installed onto vehicles



REPAIRS

client-owned equipment by appointment for a small fee.



CREDITABLE

Access to low interest loans and resources to obtain assistive technology.

For more information and to SIGN UP for our monthly updates visit us at fodac.org

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

- General: fodac@fodac.org
- Pediatric: pediatric@fodac.org
- Savannah: Savannah@fodac.org
- Veterans: veterans@fodac.org

Headquarters & Thrift Store

📍 4900 Lewis Road, Tucker, GA 30083
☎ 770-491-9014

Satellite Location

📍 7220 Sallie Mood Drive, Savannah, GA 31406
☎ 912-667-1552

ADA Questions?

Toll-Free: 1-800-949-4232

Phone: 1-404-541-9001

E-mail: adasoutheast@syr.edu

Web: adasoutheast.org

S **Syracuse University**
Burton Blatt Institute

Southeast  **Center**

**Your regional resource for
guidance on the Americans with
Disabilities Act**

Disability is Diversity

**Celebrate Inclusion. Embrace Uniqueness.
Thrive Together.**



Funded by NIDILRR grant #90DPAD0005-01-00

SCAN ME

Celebrating 35 Years of Equal Access and Opportunity

Navigating life with a disability? Get
connected with the tools to thrive.



www.bobbydodd.org

ADA HISTORY

Olmstead v. L.C. and E.W.



The Olmstead Decision is a beacon of the ADA's power, championed from the start by Atlanta Legal Aid.

THE ORIGIN:

In 1995, Atlanta Legal Aid's attorney Sue Jamieson filed suit for Lois Curtis and Elaine Wilson, demanding community-based services over institutionalization.

THE LANDMARK RULING:

The 1999 U.S. Supreme Court's Olmstead Decision established a fundamental right: under the ADA, people with disabilities must receive services in the community.

THE OLMSTEAD PROMISE:

In 2004, the Disability Integration Project is established by Legal Aid and partners to enforce Olmstead and ensure its promise of community living is realized.

Learn more about Olmstead's history and find resources at OlmsteadRights.org



ATLANTA LEGAL AID'S DISABILITY INTEGRATION PROJECT

Atlanta Legal Aid's Disability Integration Project helps people get the services they need to transition into or remain in the community, based on the Olmstead decision.

WHO WE SERVE:

- Adults and children with intellectual, developmental, physical disabilities, and mental illness.
- People moving from state psychiatric hospitals or the justice system back into the community.
- Children with disabilities, including those with high behavioral/medical needs, and those in the foster care system.

WHAT WE HELP WITH:

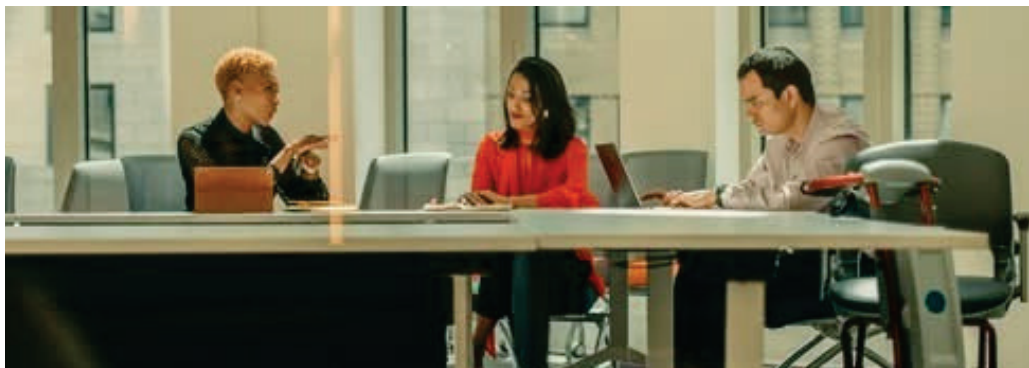
- **Obtain Community Services** waivers, housing, mental health care, and more.
- **Support Transitions** from hospitals, jails to community life.
- **Ensure Inclusive Education** for children with disabilities.
- **Strengthen Families** through community-based supports.

**CONTACT THE
DISABILITY INTEGRATION PROJECT
(404) 377-0707**



MORE INFORMATION

AtlantaLegalAid.org GeorgiaLegalAid.org
(404) 524-5811



Celebrating 35 Years of Advancing Access and Opportunity



About Us

DI-GA is a Georgia-based, business-led nonprofit focused on advancing disability inclusion in the workplace. We provide a trusted network for employers to learn, share, and grow together. Whether you're just starting or continuing your journey, we aim to be a safe and supportive space for building inclusive workplaces and driving meaningful change.



Our Mission

Our mission is to engage, educate, and advocate for disability inclusion within our workforces, workplaces, marketplace, and supply chains.



 <https://di-ga.org>

 info@di-ga.org

Disability:IN Greater Atlanta is a local affiliate of Disability:IN



Special Recognition

The Department of Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance (DCRC) would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Amya Rowe for her exceptional contributions to this publication. Her dedication, creativity, and expertise have significantly enhanced the content, providing valuable insights and resources for our community. Thank you for your hard work and commitment to promoting diversity, civil rights, and accessibility!



FULTON COUNTY

DIVERSITY & CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance

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