

Dr. Ashley Barfield is the Director of Tourism Research for Explore Georgia, the Tourism Division of the Georgia Department of Economic Development and the state's official destination marketing organization. At Explore Georgia, she leads a team who uses data, analytics, surveys, reports, and custom analyses to optimize the division's work and to monitor the pulse of the tourism industry in Georgia. Ashley holds four degrees (two bachelor's, one master's, and one Ph.D.) from the University of Georgia's College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences and Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. She joined the Explore Georgia team after completing her graduate work in applied economics and working as an Analyst for Luckie & Company. Her passion for travel and background in economics drew her to the tourism industry and to her current position, which she has served in since August of 2018. She has three cats, one dog, and a lifelong love of the great outdoors.