



The Partner Connection

The Newsletter of DCA



September, 2010

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Governor Perdue Announces \$35.6 Million in 2010 CDBG Awards

Governor Sonny Perdue has announced that Georgia has been awarded over \$43 million in federal grants from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the state's Community Development Block Grant Program.

"The Community Development Block Grant program provides an essential financial resource to Georgia's smaller communities in their efforts to fund projects that will assist low- and moderate-income citizens," said Governor Perdue. "As communities large and small are making tough spending choices, this grant announcement represents an important funding source for various local quality of life, economic development and job creation programs."

Nearly \$35.7 million is now being allocated for CDBG awards that will be used to support projects in 75 Georgia communities. Projects include water and sewer improvements, senior citizen facilities, health facilities, domestic violence centers, street and drainage improvements and replacement or rehabilitation of sub-standard and dilapidated housing. Remaining grant funds will be made available on an ongoing basis as opportunities arise for funding job creation and redevelopment projects in various parts of the state.

The CDBG program is administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), which uses funds allocated through HUD to support local initiatives that focus on improving living conditions and economic opportunities.

"We are pleased that these funds will be used to fund critical community development projects," added DCA Commissioner Mike Beatty. "Each year, the annual CDBG funding announcement demonstrates how federal, state, regional, and local partners are working together to support local communities and build a brighter future for all Georgians."

One hundred fifty-nine local governments submitted requests for over \$74 million in projects across the state while approximately \$35.6 million was available to fund local proposals. With these available dollars, 75 projects will receive funding and move forward this year. The list of awards may be found here:

<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/communities/CDBG/index.asp>

The Recipients' workshop will be held September 30, 2010 - October 1, 2010 at the Callaway Conference Center in Pine Mountain, Georgia. More information on the Recipients Workshop may also be found at the website above.

For those local governments not receiving awards this year, DCA will provide an explanation of CDBG scoring and suggest ways to improve the application for future competition.

Join Our Mailing List!

Exceeding Excellence

Did You Receive Excellent Service From A DCA Staffer? DCA's "Exceeding Excellence" Customer Service Recognition Program Allows You To Recognize A Job Very Well Done. Please consider nominating a DCA staffer that's gone above and beyond! DCA's "Exceeding Excellence" recognition program affords DCA team members and our external customers the opportunity to recognize DCA team members for providing excellent customer service. Information is available from the DCA website front page - www.dca.ga.gov. Click on the "Customer Feedback" link and complete the information.

DCA works with HUD and GBI to Clean House

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs, which distributes federal housing funds in 149 counties, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which administers the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, targeted a total of 80 people in "Operation Clean House" earlier this month in an ongoing fraud investigation.

Dennis Williams, DCA's Assistant Commissioner for Rental Assistance, said those caught in this month's sweep met the qualifications when they first entered the Housing Choice Voucher program but they either lied about their income or the number of people in their households when they went through the annual process of re-qualifying. A few of the cases date back to 2008 but most of them occurred in the previous year, he said. Mr. Williams continued, "This is a serious problem, because of the limited number of vouchers available and the current economic situation, but we continuously validate the information to make sure those most in need continue to benefit from the limited resources available."

It is also hoped that the operation will prompt others who have been getting money illegally to withdraw from the program, or will lead some to report neighbors that are not entitled to the subsidies.

Herschell Harvell, special agent in charge with the HUD Office of the Inspector General, said that it's important to send a strong message to those violating the program.

Those arrested face state charges of theft by taking or making a false statement to obtain federal funds. Federal charges also are possible, officials said. Georgia Bureau of Investigation Director Vernon Keenan stated that a person who receives benefits they are not entitled to "steals taxpayer money".

The arrests warrants were for people in 31 of the 149 Georgia counties that work through the DCA to get Housing Choice Voucher Program funds. (The other 10 counties in Georgia have housing authorities that deal directly with the federal government.) In most cases, only one or two people were arrested in each county, with higher numbers in Augusta and Dougherty County.

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (frequently called Section 8) was created to subsidize the rents of the very poor, the elderly and the disabled. The qualifications and the amount of the subsidy are determined by income and the number of people in the household. Only people making less than half the median income for the area where they live can qualify but the rules are that 75 percent of the people in the program must make no more than 30 percent of the median income in their area. Program participants pay part of their rents -- an amount equal to 30 percent of the household's income -- and the federal government directly pays the remainder owed to the the landlords.

Edward Jennings, HUD's southeast regional administrator stated that their agency is trying to be "more aggressive" now in finding those scamming the system.



Left to right: Tammy Bradshaw, GA DCA Regional Compliance Officer; Dennis Williams, Jr. GA DCA, Assistant Commissioner; Herschell Harvell, HUD OIG; Vernon Keenan, Director, GBI, and HUD Regional Administrator Edward Jennings, Jr.

DCA to Receive \$126.7 Million for Foreclosure Prevention

DCA has been awarded \$126.7 million for a new program to assist unemployed and underemployed homeowners in danger of foreclosure. *Program details are currently under development, and will be announced within the next 90 days.*

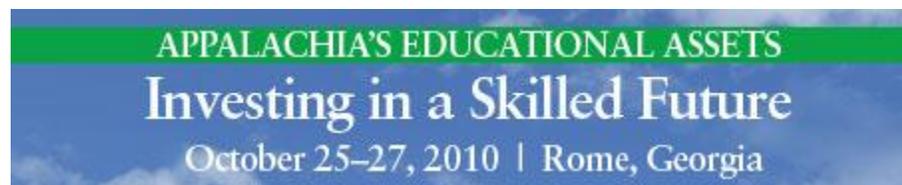
Georgia was selected as one of 17 states (plus the District of Columbia) to receive newly available TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program) funds to assist homeowners who are in danger of foreclosure resulting from the national economic downturn.

Commissioner Mike Beatty has also announced that Phil Foil, former Deputy Commissioner with DCA, will be returning to the Agency and will head up this new program for Georgia. Commissioner Beatty said, "We're pleased to be recognized for outstanding work in ARRA with the award of these additional program funds, and truly pleased that Deputy Commissioner Phil Foil has agreed to return to DCA to develop and operate this important program."



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

ARC Conference Registration Open



Appalachian communities facing economic challenges are finding creative new ways to use local resources to stimulate and support the local economy. Expanding the use of existing educational assets- both physical and knowledge based- is one such path to promoting sustainable economic development. By taking full advantage of local education programs, services, and infrastructure, communities can enhance educational achievement and workforce skills and readiness, helping to attract investment and create local jobs.

ARC's October 2010 Appalachia's Educational Assets: **Investing in a Skilled Future** conference will help you learn how your community can leverage its assets to help build and sustain stronger local economies. Presenters will address such topics as retooling the workforce, expanding instructional capacity through technology, building a healthy and educated workforce, and supporting entrepreneurial training. See the [conference agenda](#) to learn more.

The conference will be held October 25-27 at the Forum Civic Center, 301 Tribune Street, 2 Government Plaza, Rome, Georgia. The registration fee for the full conference is \$175.00. The fee includes conference materials; meals; special events; and shuttle transportation to the October 25 heritage tours and to the October 26 and 27 conference events. (See the conference agenda for detailed information).

A stand-alone registration option is available for the October 27 full-day workshop *Green Schools, Sustainable Communities: Growing New Opportunities*. The registration fee is \$50.00. The fee includes the workshop, breakfast, and lunch on October 27; and the evening reception and dinner on October 26.

[Register here today!](#)

DCA Launches New Online Public Benefits Reporting System -- Both State and Local Governments Required to Report

On January 1, 2010, **House Bill 2**, which requires governmental agencies (both state and local) that provide or administer public benefits to begin filing annual reports with DCA, became effective. The first reports, due no later than January 1, 2011, must identify public benefits provided and/or administered and report each public benefit for which the lawful presence of alien recipients have not been verified through the Department of Homeland Security's Systematic Alien Verification of Entitlements (SAVE) program.

To learn more please visit the Public Benefits Reporting website:

<http://www.dca.ga.gov/PBRegistration/LocalPBReq/Index.aspx>. After reading the general information provided there, click on the Technical Resources tab at the top of the webpage for more details about how this new reporting requirement affects your agency.

Five More Communities Designated as Communities of Opportunity

Recently, Berrien, Coffee, Cook, Grady and Seminole counties were designated by DCA as Communities of Opportunity. With community partners standing by as witnesses to the agreement between the elected officials and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, each community signed the Co-Op contract. Over the past year, the elected officials, the local champion, and their respective implementation teams have worked closely with DCA staff in creating their community improvement strategies. As participants of Co-Op, each community is required to choose 2-3 goals that can be implemented in a two year period and directly address persistent poverty.

Commissioner Beatty stated, "We're very excited about what these communities are doing and accomplishing through collaboration. I believe that going forward, collaboration between local and state governments, along with community partners, will become increasingly important. The combination of increasing expectations and needs of communities, and the lack of the ability of individual units of local government to meet those needs is going to compel us to collaborate. We understand the commitment these community leaders are making to not only improve their communities for themselves and their children, but for generations to come. This is just the beginning for these Co-Op communities."

As one of several benefits of the Initiative, over the next two years Berrien, Coffee, Cook, Grady and Seminole counties will continue to work closely with DCA staff and other state and local agencies in receiving technical assistance to help accomplish the goals listed in their community improvement strategies. Additionally, these communities are now eligible to receive GEFA and Downtown Development Revolving Loans at a reduced rate, a \$5,000 implementation grant to be matched by the communities and the ability to apply for CDBG funding for two consecutive years.

For more information on the Communities of Opportunity Initiative or to review the community improvement strategies, please visit DCA's website or contact Program Coordinator Patrice R. Williams at 404-323-9133 or patrice.williams@dca.ga.gov.



**Berrien
County
Team
Signs
Contract**

RESIDENTIAL GREEN CODE, ENERGY CODE AND GEORGIA AMENDMENTS

The State Codes Advisory Committee (SCAC) met on July 29, 2010. It will recommend that the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Board adopt the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) with Georgia Amendments and the 2008 National Green Building Standard (NGBS) with Georgia Amendments. It also considered and will recommend adoption of Georgia Amendments to the 2006 Editions of the following State Minimum Standard Codes: International Mechanical Code (IMC), International Plumbing Code (IPC), and the International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings (IRC).

The Notice of Intention to Adopt, Synopsis and the proposed Georgia Amendments are available for review on our website:

<http://www.dca.ga.gov/development/constructioncodes/programs/codeamendments.asp>.

In accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, a public hearing has been scheduled for 10:00 A.M., Wednesday, September 22, 2010 at the Department of Community Affairs, Room 302, 60 Executive Park South, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia.

The proposed new code editions and Georgia Amendments will be presented to the DCA Board of Directors at 10:30 A.M. on Wednesday, November 3, 2010 at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, 60 Executive Park South, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30329-2231, (404) 679-4940. If approved, they will become effective January 1, 2011. If you have any questions or need additional information please contact Ted Miltiades at 404-679-3106 or Ted.Miltiades@dca.ga.gov.

New Board Members for Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism

The Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism held the AmeriCorps Program Directors' retreat and board meeting August 10-12, 2010, at the University of Georgia's Conference Center & Hotel, in Athens, Georgia. The DCA Commissioner Mike Beatty was the evening speaker at a reception and dinner on Tuesday, August 10, 2010, for program staff, board members, and guests.

Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue made three new appointments to the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism Board. They are:

Kimberly K. Brannen, Statesboro - Brannen is a senior vice president at Sea Island Bank. She serves on the board of directors for the Statesboro Service League and chairs the Joseph's Home for Boys committee. She served on the Bulloch county board of education school council, was selected as a "40 under 40" award recipient for The Savannah Business Report, and a Journal 2010 award recipient of the "Bulloch County 20 under 40" sponsored by The Statesboro Herald. Brannen earned a bachelor's degree from Georgia Southern University. She and her husband, Aubert, have two children.



Elaine S. Pritchard, Warner Robins - Pritchard is the vice president, business development director and chief financial officer of Donaldson, Garrett & Associates, Inc. She is a member of Leadership Macon, the Georgia Employers Association and the Warner Robins Chamber of Commerce. She serves on the executive board of the International Right of Way Association, as well as program chair of the Society of American Military Engineers. Pritchard and her husband, Ken, have seven children and eleven grandchildren.

Heather H. Teilhet, Smyrna – Teilhet is a government relations representative for the Georgia Electric Membership Corporation. She is a member of the Cobb County Public Schools Educational Foundation. She was selected "Top 20 under 40" by Cobb Life Magazine in 2007, and served as primary strategic communicator for Governor Sonny Perdue. Teilhet earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia and a master's degree from Georgia State University. She and her husband, Rob, have two children.

In addition, **Richard McIntyre, Woodland** was reappointed for a three-year term that expires June 1, 2013.

"On behalf of the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism board, I am excited to welcome these community leaders to our team", said GCSV board chair Laurie Chandler (Rome). "Each of them joins us with years of demonstrated commitment to addressing societal issues, and we look forward to the experience and insight these board members will bring to our policy and decision making."

GCSV currently funds 18 AmeriCorps programs in Georgia that will enroll 660 AmeriCorps members. The GCSV also funds 12 Learn and Serve programs that will engage more than 15,000 Georgia school students in service-learning activities.

SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

September is National Preparedness Month

It's hurricane season...be prepared!

National Preparedness Month is a time to take action and prepare for natural and man-made disasters. During National Preparedness Month, GEMA's Ready Georgia campaign (www.ready.ga.gov) is focusing on important steps that individuals, families, businesses and communities should take to prepare for an emergency including:

- Get a Kit
- Make a Plan
- Be Informed
- Get Involved

As a part of your plan, add this website to your emergency list: www.GeorgiaHousingSearch.org



Every disaster that results in housing displacement, whether a hurricane or a house fire, is devastating to the individuals affected. GeorgiaHousingSearch.org provides that safety net of affordable housing opportunities needed for disaster victims and to those providing services so that a residence may be re-established while lives are being rebuilt. This easy-to-use web site lists immediately available rental properties. Families and individuals can search by location, price range and housing description, including number of bedrooms and bathrooms, as well as by a host of other amenities.

Property providers in Georgia responsible for rental units can list their available properties on the site AT NO COST. The website is bilingual (English and Spanish) and has a toll-free number, (877) 428-8844, available to assist potential renters or property owners and managers. In addition, the site's unique Special Needs Housing Search feature has assisted Georgia caseworkers locate housing for many traditionally hard-to-place families and individuals. For more information, please contact Sheila Barry at (404) 679-4855 or sheila.barry@dca.ga.gov