

DCA turned YOUR feedback and questions from the 2008 DCA Customer Service Town Hall Meetings into Actions and Answers

WHAT YOU SAID	DCA PROGRAM(S)	RESPONSE
Have you looked at the proposed changes to the International Codes? Does the state have to follow what was adopted?	Building Construction	When the State adopts any International Code, it goes through a task force review with public meetings. At the end of the task force review, the task force will make recommendations as to whether or not to adopt a new code. In addition, it can recommend changes to the new code. Therefore, the State does not have to follow exactly what was adopted by the International Code Council Conference. For up-to-date information regarding the adoption of any State Minimum Standard Codes (International Codes), please contact the Department of Community Affairs Construction Codes and Industrialized Buildings Section at (404) 679-3118 or codes@dca.ga.gov.
How will the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) address the home foreclosure problem?	Community Development / Homeownership	The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) will provide funding to acquire and redevelop foreclosed properties that might otherwise become sources of abandonment and blight within their communities. DCA will provide funding directly to local governments and non-profit and for profit development entities through its direct and flexible pools. This funding must be used to carry out eligible activities and to provide funds to purchase foreclosed or abandoned homes and to rehabilitate, resell, or redevelop these homes in order to stabilize neighborhoods and stem the decline of house values of neighboring homes.
In working with a nonprofit affordable housing developer attempting to get funding through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, we discovered that the QAP for the LIHTC program has a deadline of July 31 for final commitment of leverage funds required. Some applicants use the CHIP program as part of the leverage and final announcements on that program's awards are not made by July 31 so there is a conflict. Another program that can play a large part in leveraging LIHTC is the Affordable Housing Program of the Federal Home Loan Bank but their award process goes a little past the CHIP program's so it is another conflict.	Affordable Housing / Community Development	The QAP does not prevent an applicant from accepting financing that is received after application submission date. However, points can only be obtained from financing that is in place at application submission. While DCA is cognizant of the many different deadlines of different funding sources, it would be difficult to modify our deadlines to take into consideration the deadlines of other programs each year.
How will the state budget shortfall impact the DCA Budget?	Administration	Because of the decline in state revenues, DCA has had to strategically assess where we devote financial resources to meet our mandated responsibilities and our core mission. We've also tried to take cuts that minimize the negative impact to our customers. We have made cuts to operational budgets and have also opted not to fill certain vacancies. Duties from vacant positions have been reallocated to existing staff and we've looked for ways to work smarter and more efficiently. Even with these efforts, the FY09 state funds for DCA were cut by over 40%. Two of the largest cuts were to our Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund program (\$1.5 million) and our Life Sciences Facilities Fund program \$4,403,282). DCA will continue to work with the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget and the General Assembly to meet the demands of our customers while operating within the strict confines of these very lean budget times.
Do you anticipate that state building codes will be amended to require sprinklers in single family homes?	Building Construction	Currently the State does not require sprinklers in single family homes. Any changes that are made to the State Minimum Standard Codes must go through a task review process with public meetings. For up-to-date information concerning the State Minimum Standard Codes, please contact the Department of Community Affairs Construction Codes and Industrialized Building Section at (404) 679-3118 or codes@dca.ga.gov.

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It's important that rural counties in fast growing parts of the state maintain their rural character, agriculture, and tourism. How can DCA help to manage for mixed use planning and for implementation of plan?	Planning & Quality Growth	DCA has a Special Project team within its Office of Planning and Quality Growth that can assist local governments with such initiatives. To request a Special Project team, please call 404-679-5279. Another possible source of assistance on this issue is your Regional Commission.
The criteria for the tier system isn't relevant to many counties in our region. Higher retiree population, second home residents have skewed the demographics. These counties still have the same challenges for more jobs. The changes to the Opportunity Zone regulations help but we still don't qualify for Enterprise Zone. Are there any plans to change the EZ regulations?	Economic Development	During the 2009 legislative session, HB 427 passed both chambers and is expected to be signed by the Governor. The proposed legislative changes to the State Enterprise Zone Act were offered by DCA in response to this very question. The changes set the qualifying poverty threshold for EZ to 15% and also allowed "parcels" that were "adjacent to" qualifying 15% poverty areas to qualify. These changes provide a possibility for Opportunity Zone Job Tax Credits for most areas that need redevelopment and revitalization. In addition, the Department partnered with GDEcD to suggest language for the "Quality Jobs" Job Tax Credit that passed both chambers and awaits the Governor's signature. If signed, this change at BEST will provide a level playing field for job tax credits to all of Georgia where higher paying quality jobs are being offered.
What happened to the funding for smaller economic development projects – LDF and LAG? The businesses that are attracted to our area offer 15 jobs or less. It's tough for us to qualify for grants that require a higher level of job creation.	Economic Development	Unfortunately, the elimination of LDF and LAG were brought about by the need to trim State spending and balance the State budget. We understand the concern and hope to see programs for small business return once the economic situation stabilizes.
It is difficult to compete when there is an annual or semi-annual round of applications for grants such as One Georgia. Our region is attractive to smaller business market and can't compete against larger projects creating 50+ jobs	Economic Development	DCA's small business program the Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRFL) allows projects to be submitted at any time. While funding is somewhat limited due to the budget situation, please investigate the availability and use of these low-interest funds should your potential project be in a historic commercial area.
How can we get more room to serve more men addicted to drugs when we have previously applied for grants but been turned down?	Special Housing Initiatives	Funding to expand your facility has generally been available through two grant opportunities: Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) program and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. However, beginning in the 2009 application round, ESG no longer accepts development applications due to the very high demand for resources for shelter operations. Therefore, your primary means from DCA to expand your facility will be through CDBG. The project you propose is an eligible activity serving a limited clientele under the program requirements. DCA administers the CDBG program in those communities that do not receive CDBG funding directly from HUD. Further, you will be required to partner with the local government in your community as an application must be submitted by the responsible local government. You should contact DCA's Community Development and Finance Division at 404-679-3168 to learn more about the application process and requirements. If your organization primarily serves a community which receives CDBG funding directly from HUD, you should also contact the responsible local government.

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What will be the criteria for disbursement of funds for foreclosure assistance (NSP)?	Community Development / Homeownership	For local governments that were awarded formula allocations, upon DCA approval of local agreements and contracts, recipients will be able to draw funds upon presentation of adequate supporting documentation for specific activities. / Qualified borrowers will make application with a Georgia Dream Participating Lender to purchase eligible foreclosed properties.
Does DCA fund radon detection in homes and repairs to homes to reduce the radon levels?	Environmental Management	DCA provides funding for radon education and free home radon test kits through the University of Georgia Extension Service and Southface Energy Institute. Please call 1-800-ASK-UGA1 to reach your County Extension office to request a free test kit. However, DCA does not provide funding for reduction of radon (mitigation) in homes and is not aware of any such funding in Georgia; Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Radon Site: http://www.dca.ga.gov/development/EnvironmentalManagement/programs/radon.asp ; UGA Cooperative Extension Radon Site: http://www.fcs.uga.edu/ext/housing/radon/index.php ; Southface Energy Institute Radon Site: http://www.southface.org/web/resources&service/radon/sf_radon-menu.htm .
How is the RDC merger and transition to Regional Commissions going?	Planning & Quality Growth	From a statewide perspective, the transition of the 16 Regional Development Centers to 12 Regional Commissions is going well. With the exception of the North Ga. RDC region, which has not embraced its merger with the Coosa Valley RDC in Northwest Ga., the remainder of the RDCs throughout the state appear to be working diligently to accomplish this transition. Effective July 1, 2009 all RDCs will transition to Regional Commissions with new statutory responsibilities, revisions to the composition of their policy body, and increased state funding from DCA.
May bond funds awarded in 2008 be carried over to 2009?	Administration	Certain types of projects qualify for a three year "carry forward" under the federal tax code. These types of projects include mortgage revenue bonds, multi-family bonds, student loan bonds, and exempt facility bonds. Industrial development bonds or IDBs, do not qualify for carry forward.
Is it possible to get credit for a contiguous site development to qualify for a 9% tax credit project? Shouldn't consideration be given for building out an existing site?	Affordable Housing	Yes, it is possible. DCA encourages infill/smart growth by awarding points for such developments. We also awards points for certain projects if they are part of a phased development meeting DCA requirements.

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Has any thought been given to working with developers to produce affordable housing for people transitioning out of shelters?	Special Housing Initiatives / Affordable Housing	DCA's Permanent Supportive Housing Program provides funding to owners/developers of affordable housing with support services geared to Homeless Tenants with disabilities. The SFY2009 Program Description was released in February and is available on our website http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/housingdevelopment/programs/permanentSupportiveHousing.asp / DCA's LIHTC program has successfully utilized Atlanta Development Authority's Homeless grant funds and Federal Home Loan Bank's AHP funds to produce affordable housing for people transitioning out of shelters. DCA's Shelter + Care can be used as rental assistance for such tenants too. In addition, DCA has a Special Needs set-aside of housing credits for a variety of special needs projects, which could include project(s) for people transitioning out of shelters.
How do you define affordable housing in Atlanta?	Affordable Housing / Homeownership	For rental housing, affordable housing generally means that tenants will pay approximately 30% of their income toward the rent. In Atlanta, if a household is at 60% of the area median income level and if the household does not pay any electricity, gas, garbage collection, water and sewer bills, the monthly rents will be at or below the following: \$801 for 1 bedroom, \$961 for 2 BR, and \$1110 for 3 BR. / Affordable housing applies to dwelling units whose total housing costs are deemed affordable to qualified borrowers with household incomes of less than 120% of HUD's area median income.
Are there grants for redevelopment of dilapidated housing and turning them into affordable housing?	Affordable Housing / Community Development	DCA's Georgia Dream Single Family Development Program provides funding to encourage the redevelopment and rehabilitation of housing for sale to low and moderate income buyers. In neighborhoods where the development costs exceeds the after construction appraised value of the unit, developers may receive a grant to cover the excess development costs. In addition, home buyers who purchase these units are eligible to receive down payment assistance. Please contact our Office of Special Housing Initiatives at (404) 679-0680 for further information. / On an annual basis, the Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) allows "non-entitlement" local governments to compete for federal HOME dollars to provide loans for rehabilitation of deteriorated housing and forgivable loans for downpayment assistance to purchase rehabilitated and new homes for low and moderate-income families.
What are the criteria for developers to develop more rental housing using the LIHTC program?	Affordable Housing	DCA's criteria for developers utilizing the LIHTC program is available in our 2009 Qualified Allocation Plan (http://dca.ga.gov/housing/HousingDevelopment/programs/documents/2009DCAQualifiedAllocationPlan.pdf)

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What is the plan for those areas where single family homes are just sitting vacant?	Community Development	The Department is working closely with local governments to understand and implement "redevelopment areas" in concert with its CDBG program (revitalization areas) and economic development programs (Opportunity Zones job tax credits). Utilization of these redevelopment areas allows local governments to more easily enforce local codes and spur redevelopment within troubled areas. The layering of state CDBG financing and job tax credits provides incentives that when used with local enforcement can assist troubled neighborhoods to begin the process of redevelopment.
How is the decrease in tax revenues affecting state grants such as the Local Assistance Grants?	Administration	All of the Local Assistance Grants (LAGs) in the FY'09 budget were eliminated in the '09 Amended Budget, and no new LAGs were proposed in the FY 10 budget. The prospect for future LAGs remain dim until such time as revenue begins to increase.
Is there any assistance to handle surge of people that are now facing homelessness?	Special Housing Initiatives	The ARRA legislation signed in February provided over \$33 million to the state and localities to provide homeless prevention and rapid re-housing assistance. Of this total funding amount, DCA will receive slightly over \$19 million. DCA released for public comment a draft Substantial Amendment to its FFY2008 Consolidated Plan on April 30th outlining HPRP requirements. DCA will submit its final Substantial Amendment to HUD for approval by May 18. At this point, we anticipate accepting applications by July 1 with the intent to make all awards by September 1, 2009. Please regularly visit our web page for updated information: http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/specialneeds/programs/HPRP.asp
What does the true picture for homelessness look like in Cherokee County?	Special Housing Initiatives	While the true picture of homelessness may only be assessed upon the completion of a homeless count in the county that includes an assessment of individuals on the street, in shelters or living in "precariously housed" situations, DCA's predictive model estimated that between 100 - 500 individuals are homeless in Cherokee County in 2008.
What can an AmeriCorps volunteer do?	Georgia Commission on Service and Volunteerism	AmeriCorps members provide direct service to individuals or communities in five specific focus areas: Education, Environment, Public Safety, Homeland Security or Unmet Human Needs. Examples include tutoring, GED instruction, neighborhood safety patrols, services to persons with special needs and mentoring youth.
Is it possible to leverage AmeriCorps program with recycling programs?	Georgia Commission on Service and Volunteerism / Environmental Management	AmeriCorps programs can include a recycling component and the AmeriCorps grant can be used in combination with other federal and nonfederal grants or programs. Federal grant funds cannot be used to match AmeriCorps grants except under special circumstances. / It is possible, but we would question the practicality of such an approach. While these two DCA programs are not mutually exclusive, we would need to know more specifics about the proposed approach before we could provide a definitive answer.

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How do we get more information about planning and quality growth?	Planning & Quality Growth	Contact Jim Frederick, Director of our Office of Planning and Quality Growth at (404) 679-3105 or jim.frederick@dca.ga.gov.
Is there a program to abate the litter on the roadside?	Environmental Management	Yes, DCA provides a variety of resources to deal with roadside litter. Many of them are available by search www.litteritcostsyoudca.org or contacting DCA at (404) 679-3142.
What is the status of the Brownfield's program? Will there be any funding for clean up activities?	Economic Development	The EPA (federal) Brownfield Program has limited grant and local funds available. The contact for the federal EPA's Georgia state coordinator is 404-562-8534. The number for the state EPD Brownfield office is 404-656-7802.
Is there any funding for the renovation of historic county courthouses?	Economic Development	Unfortunately there is not a dedicated source of funding or a stand-alone program for renovation of historical courthouses. Most restoration is funded through local initiatives including bonds and SPLOST initiatives.
Does DCA have any funding for starting animal control?	Community Development	Funding for this purpose is not available from DCA.
What happens with the data collected by DCA, UGA, GA Tech, etc? Will the State create a state data center for all of this info?	Research and Surveys	DCA shares financial and tax data collected through surveys with the Tax and Expenditure Data Center housed at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia. The web address is www.ted.cviog.uga.edu . DCA also collects survey data and provides it in electronic report formats that can be accessed at www.dca.ga.gov and click "research".
Is there a state plan to develop industrial parks in rural areas?	Economic Development	The OneGeorgia Authority offers low interest deferred loans for the development of industrial parks in rural areas.
Is there a statewide water and transportation inventory?	Planning & Quality Growth	There are maps available from DCA's Office of Decision Support (404) 679-4946 that depict both the water resources and transportation infrastructure throughout the state. Copies of these maps can also be accessed via DCA's website at www.dca.ga.gov .
Why doesn't my county have minimum building standards?	Building Construction	The Uniform Codes Act which was adopted in 1991 took a set of construction codes (the State Minimum Standard Codes) and made them applicable throughout the entire State of Georgia. While the State Minimum Standard Codes are effective throughout the entire State, it is under the authority of the local jurisdiction (county or municipality) to enforce these codes. If you have questions concerning this issue, please contact the Department of Community Affairs Construction Codes and Industrialized Buildings Section at (404) 679-3118 or codes@dca.ga.gov .
Are state funds available for solid waste or hazardous waste?	Environmental Management	The Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has limited funding for scrap tire pile clean-ups and remediation of contaminated sites under the hazardous waste trust fund. EPD can be contacted at (494-656-4713).

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Does the reduced rate on funding for being a WaterFirst Communities expire?	Environmental Management	WaterFirst Communities are subject to a periodic review for compliance with the program and at a minimum Communities must renew their application for WaterFirst designation every five years. If a local government remains in compliance with the program requirements and fulfills the renewal application and review requirements the program incentives remain intact and are also renewed.
What can a city and the state do about five fully built subdivisions that are struggling to be sold? It seems builders are having a hard time reaching the right market.	Community Development / Regional Services	The state offers a program through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) that may assist in the sale of the homes. The program is only eligible on foreclosed properties owned by a bank, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, or a non-profit organization. The program, called Georgia Dream NSP, provides a \$14,000 down payment assistance loan that may be used to assist an eligible individual or family purchase the home. The financial institution would have to agree to sell the home at 85% of its current appraised value. For more information on this program, visit the following link: www.dca.ga.gov/housing/Homeownership/programs/gadreamnspdownpayment.asp
Are there educational opportunities for persons interested in building issues - Green (LEEDs certification) vs. Traditional; Preservation considerations; Tax Credits, etc.?	Planning & Quality Growth / Downtown Development	DCA does not provide training in these areas directly. Training is provided by a variety of sources and anyone interested in such training should contact DCA's Office of Planning and Quality Growth at (404) 679-3119 for assistance.
Are there opportunities to address plastics, which are often land filled. Since lids and labels have to be removed, is there a way to improve the market for plastics?	Environmental Management	Georgia has markets for just about all the post-consumer plastics generated in the state. Regional differences exist regarding collection and processing opportunities. Lids and labels do not have to be removed prior to recycling. The best way to determine if plastic recycling collection and processing markets exist in your region is to contact the DCA's Office of Environmental Management (OEM) at 404-679-1598. Alternatively, you can access DCA's Recycling Markets Directory on DCA's web page at http://www.dca.ga.gov/development/EnvironmentalManagement/programs/recycling.asp .
Why is CDBG primarily designed for low/moderate income persons?	Community Development	The federal enabling legislation requires that CDBG funds primarily benefit low- to moderate-income persons. It's the law.

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Reimbursement for housing activities currently takes as long as 3 months. A contract is in place ensuring that any overpayments are to be returned. What assurances can the receiving agency make for reimbursements to be quicker? What can be done for smoother, quicker responses?	Special Housing Initiatives / Administration	The Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless has focused on improving the timeliness of its reimbursement process. We are continuing this effort to ensure that all payments are made within the 15 days stipulated in our grant agreement. The first step to improve our turn around is to ensure that grantees submit complete and accurate reimbursement requests for eligible costs. By returning reimbursement requests with significant issues, DCA is placing greater responsibility on the grantees to ensure that their reimbursement requests are complete and accurate. The second step is to improve our processing time by program staff to review and make a request for payment. We are currently charting our turn around time and through the efforts have reduced our review time from an average of 19 days in September 2008 to 3 days in March 2009. This average is now within our goal of 5 days for our programmatic review. Our next step is to ensure that the time from our request for the payment of funds to the time that the funds are wired to our grantees bank account does not exceed 10 days.
Will there be Housing Choice Vouchers for permanent supportive housing?	Rental Assistance	DCA will continue to provide project-based rental assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program for any developments receiving development funding under the Permanent Supportive Housing Program within DCA's HCV service area.
Is 9-1-1 funding available for any and all communities? Do communities have to partner in order to get funding?	Community Development	The OneGeorgia Authority offers low interest loans/grants for E-9-1-1 funding of regional initiatives for rural areas. Yes, communities must partner to receive consideration for this funding.
Is there a cost to local governments to participate in the Communities of Opportunity initiative?	Regional Services	The community is asked to provide a 50% match to the communities of Opportunity Initiative grant. The value of the grant is \$5,000. The amount that the community has to provide is \$2,500.
Where is the Georgia Planning Act in state code?	Planning & Quality Growth	Once the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 was placed in Code, it was separated and is contained in several sections of the Code. The primary reference would be OCGA 50-8-1 et seq. Additional portions of this Act that specifically pertain to local governments can be found at OCGA 36-70 et seq.
Will there be continued assistance after the two year period of Communities of Opportunity is over?	Regional Services	Yes, as long as the community continues to implement and update the Community Improvement Strategy (CTS).
Is there a way to develop a better understanding of the new hotel/motel tax codes?	Research and Surveys	The Tourism Development Alliance and related organizations provide training during annual conferences. Also, the Georgia Municipal Association includes updates on the hotel motel tax during their annual conference Tax 101 training session.

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Is there funding assistance to demolish several old buildings within a community and develop a vacant building into a multi-purpose building?	Community Development / Downtown Development	The State CDBG program sometimes sees competitive projects that propose the redevelopment of existing vacant or blighted buildings in eligible CDBG "public facilities". In addition, the CDBG Redevelopment program can provide very attractive financing to private sector businesses to redevelopment vacant and historic building into viable enterprises.
What are the matching fund requirements for CDBG?	Community Development	The required cash match for CDBG is 0% for amounts up to \$300,000 in CDBG funds, 5% of amounts from \$300,001 to \$500,000 in CDBG funds and 10% of amounts from \$500,001 to \$800,000 in CDBG funds up to a maximum of \$40,000.
If a Leadership Program is not specifically mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan, is it eligible for the funds made available through Communities of Opportunity?	Regional Services	Yes, as long as it is included as a goal in the Communities of Opportunity Initiative and Community Improvement Strategy (CIS).
Is there any money available for downtown development?	Downtown Development	The State DDRLF program provides low interest financing for downtown redevelopment projects. Visit the following link: http://www.dca.ga.gov/economic/financing/programs/ddrlf.asp
Is an applicant able to find out why a CDBG request was not funded?	Community Development	Absolutely, the department routinely provides detailed written explanations of applicant's scores and relative competitiveness.
Is there a way to find out if a county's Development Authority completed the required annual registration?	Research and Surveys	Yes, you can access the authorities registration data base at www.dca.ga.gov and selecting the "Searchable Databases" tab at the top of the homepage.
If a real estate person wants to develop housing units in the City, would DCA assist the developer? Is it the same if a city wants to develop the project?	Affordable Housing / Special Housing Initiatives	The level of DCA's assistance to a developer in putting together a project application will depend on the program from which the developer is seeking funding. DCA's Office of Special Housing Initiatives will provide direct technical assistance to applicants seeking funds under the Permanent Supportive Housing or Georgia Dream Single Family Development programs. However, because of the competitive nature of the programs operated by the Office of Affordable Housing, direct technical assistance is very limited.
What are DCA's procedures for notifying local governments about the due dates of the Comprehensive Plan and other plans like the Solid Waste Plan?	Planning & Quality Growth / Environmental Management	Regional Commissions are contractually required to keep local governments in their regions apprized of their Comprehensive and Solid Waste Management Planning due dates. Local governments can also view these deadlines on the web at: www.georgiaplanning.com or contact DCA at (404) 679-3142.

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How can a recycling program be started?	Environmental Management	This is highly dependent upon the recycling collection and processing resources available in your region. The best way to determine if recycling collection and processing markets exist in your region is to contact your OEM Regional Staff representative prior to starting a program. Please call DCA's Office of Environmental Management at 404-679-3142 and we will connect you with the Regional Staff representative that serves your part of the State. Your Regional Staff representative can provide technical assistance and help identify various recycling collection options for your community and/or region.
Are there available programs to renovate elderly housing in an effort to make residences safe?	Special Housing Initiatives / Affordable Housing / CHIP	Elderly housing may only be renovated for safety purposes by local governments seeking funding through the CHIP program. However, funding may be received through our Home Access Program to improve the accessibility of an owner-occupied unit. / Low income housing tax credit, mortgage revenue bond, HOME, and Neighborhood Stabilization programs are available to renovate certain elderly housing properties.
What is the difference in the new Opportunity Zone legislation and the older legislation that created the Tax Credits?	Economic Development	The older legislation is generally referred to as the "County Tier System" and provides for a variable statewide job tax credit for any business or headquarters of any such business engaged in manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, processing, telecommunications, tourism, or research and development industries. County tiers are ranked and qualify for variable job tax credits based on unemployment rate; per capita income; and percentage of residents whose incomes are below the poverty level. The tax credits vary from \$750 per job to \$3,500 per job in the poorest areas.
What will funding for more recycling hubs be available?	Environmental Management	The Regional Recycling Hub Program recently was awarded the 2009 National Notable Achievement Award from EPA, unfortunately additional funding from the State's Solid Waste Trust Fund was not provided in FY2009 or FY2010 to allow for additional hubs. Future funding at this time is not known.
When will interest rates go down on the Georgia Dream program so it will be more competitive?	Homeownership	The Georgia Dream Program interest rates have been impacted by the housing crisis. We sell Mortgage Revenue Bonds (MRB) to get the money to lend to first time homebuyers. Currently, the MRB market is not favorable for affordable interest rates. We are looking into alternatives that will allow us to offer lower interest rates for the Georgia Dream Program.

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Is there assistance available in addressing blighted housing?	Special Housing Initiatives / Community Development	DCA's Georgia Dream Single Family Development Program may be used to eliminate blighted housing conditions through the demolition and new construction and/or rehabilitation of the existing structure for housing made available for sale to low and moderate income families. / On an annual basis, the Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) allows "non-entitlement" local governments to compete for federal HOME dollars to provide loans for rehabilitation of deteriorated housing and forgivable loans for downpayment assistance to purchase rehabilitated and new homes for low and moderate-income families. In addition, non-entitlement local governments can also compete for state CDBG funds which can assist local initiatives aimed at neighbor revitalization in certain low and moderate-income areas.
The Housing Relocation Program is now very complicated and it is getting harder to do housing rehabilitation and to reach low income persons who can qualify. Can it go back to the way it once was?	Special Housing Initiatives / Community Development	The name of this program does not fit any existing DCA program. However, the questioner may have intended to mention the complexity of the "Uniform Relocation Act" (URA) which is invoked when temporarily moving people who are having their housing rehabilitated through CDBG, HOME, or CHIP. Please note the URA's requirements are mandatory and must be followed when using federal funds for rehabilitation. The department does offer training workshops to discuss these requirements and provide TA for implementation.
Is it possible for the words, "and for low cost affordable housing" be added to the definition of "eminent domain" in the law?	Administration	The right of eminent domain is defined in OCGA 22-1-2. The right of eminent domain is the right of the state to reassert its dominion over any portion of the soil of the state on account of public exigency and for the public good. During a time of war or insurrection the proper authorities may possess and hold any part of the territory of the state for the common safety, and in time of peace the General Assembly may authorize the appropriation of land for public purposes, such as the opening of roads, construction of defenses, or providing channels for trade or travel. The power to change the right of eminent domain requires action by the General Assembly.
Is there more information on the "Rapid Re-Housing Program" as to how use and implement the program?	Special Housing Initiatives	DCA released for public comment on April 30 a Substantial Amendment to our FFY2008 Consolidated Plan that outlines DCA's proposed requirements and policies for use of funding available through the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing program. The federal requirements for the program are on our web site at: http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/specialneeds/programs/HPRP.asp
Is there a correlation with the capacity for the number of beds needed for the homeless on any given night?	Special Housing Initiatives	An organization should determine the capacity of its shelter based on the resources (financial, staffing, and space) available to the entity as well as the demand for shelter resources within the community.
What is DCA turn-around time for reviewing a local government's comprehensive plan?	Planning & Quality Growth	This law provides DCA a maximum of 40 calendar days to complete our review of a local government Comprehensive Plan. In most instances, DCA completes its review earlier than this deadline.

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Do you offer dispute resolution within your Service Delivery Strategy assistance?	Planning & Quality Growth	DCA's role under the Service Delivery Strategy law is to verify whether or not a local Strategy meets the requirements of the law. It would be, or could be perceived to be, a conflict of interest on DCA's part if agency staff directly participated in local conflict resolution. DCA's Office of Planning and Quality Growth does maintain a listing of mediators throughout the state, and upon request, will provide this listing to any local government(s).
Can DCA create a program for homebuyers with 'b" credit offering a slightly higher interest rate or something similar?	Homeownership	The DCA Georgia Dream Program was created to help first time homebuyers purchase homes with affordable first mortgage financing and down payment assistance. Most of the loans we purchase are insured by FHA. FHA has flexible lending terms for people who want to purchase a home. If someone does not qualify for an FHA loan we recommend they attend one of our free pre-purchase housing counseling sessions. The counselor will help you prepare for homeownership by reviewing your credit and establishing a plan to improve your credit to a point where you will be able to qualify for a low cost mortgage.
Is there anyone on staff to help maneuver through creating our own trust fund?	Special Housing Initiatives	DCA does not have staff available to assist with the creation of a local housing trust fund; however, our Community Initiatives staff can link you with available resources nationally that may provide direction and assistance. Please contact our Community Initiatives staff at communityinitiatives@dca.ga.gov for further assistance. Please be sure to indicate your city and/or county name in your inquiry.
Does DCA offer IDA programs as it relates to credit counseling?	Homeownership	DCA partners with non-profit agencies which offer IDA programs for down payment assistance. Please contact Karen Young at karen.young@dca.ga.gov for information specific to your community.
How and when do you determine when to issue housing vouchers? Is there a priority system for those communities that have huge job losses?	Rental Assistance	There are several factors that can determine when and where to issue vouchers, including: -Availability of housing stock. -The need to maintain a sustainable Per Unit Cost (PUC) as it relates to funding. -The balancing of caseloads. -Staff vacancies