Appendix F - Georgia's Housing Source

USING THIS GUIDE

Affordable, quality housing builds strong communities a strong economy, and provides the cornerstone of family life. As the state housing agency, the Department of Community Affairs works to ensure that Georgia's have the housing they need. DCA is responsible for financing affordable housing development, setting building standards, and reviewing local plans. DCA also provides financial help to tenants and homeownership education and financing for home buyers. Programs that help finance emergency shelter and services, neighborhood revitalization, and programs for citizens with special needs are also the responsibility of DCA. Because of the diversity of housing programs within the Department, this publication is intended to be a guidebook. It provides a brief overview of all DCA's housing related programs and contact information for the office responsible for that program. Because program availability, selection criteria and application procedures will change from time to time, interested individuals are strongly encouraged to visit our web site at www.dca.state.ga.us to get up-to-date detailed information on the state's housing programs.

Look For These:

The housing programs listed in this guide include a description and contact information for each. Next to each program title, you will find icons representing corresponding information for each program. The description of each icon is listed below.

Administration of State/Federal Requirement
DCA administration of a state or federal law or regulation

Funding Available
Loan or grant program

Technical Assistance or Other Services
A program that offers assistance that does not include monetary assistance

Individuals Meeting Program Requirements
Persons meeting the program requirements may apply for program funding (loan or grant as applicable)

Local Government
Local governmental organizations such as cities, counties, or housing authorities(depending on program requirements) may apply for program funding

Business
Private, for-profit businesses meeting program requirements may apply for program funding (loan, grant, or tax credit as applicable)

Nonprofit Organization
Not-for-profit organizations meeting program requirements may apply for program funding (loan, grant, or tax credit as applicable)

GEORGIA'S HOUSING SOURCE

THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

A comprehensive guide to the Department of Community Affairs' housing programs and resources for the state of Georgia

JULY 2002

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Construction Codes

Construction codes set the basic rules for construction in Georgia in 14 minimum standard codes. A committee of outside experts reviews the model codes and recommends adoption and/or modifications to DCA's Board, which then adopts them for the State. Georgia state law specifies that 8 of the 14 codes are mandatory. The mandatory codes cover areas such as electrical, mechanical, gas, plumbing energy conservation, and fire prevention. These codes apply to all construction whether or not the codes are enforced by the city or county. The remaining 6 codes are permissive codes. They are applicable only if a local government chooses to adopt and enforce them. The permissive codes include topics such as swimming pools, excavation and grading, and existing buildings.

Contact: *Construction Codes and Industrialized Buildings Section at 404-679-3118 or by email at codes@dca.state.ga.us*

Coordinated Planning Program

The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 directs all city and county governments to prepare a comprehensive plan to guide their future growth. The Act also provides for the preparation of regional and state plans. The comprehensive plans must provide information on the community's population, economic development plans, natural and historic resources, community facilities, housing and land use. For each of these elements, the plan must include an inventory and assessment of needs, a statement of goals, and a description of the strategy for plan implementation. The Act calls for an update of the short term work program at least every five years and a complete update of the plan at least every ten years. Because these plans address transportation, community facilities, and land use, they have an important impact on the type and affordability of housing available within a community.

Contact: *The Office of Coordinated Planning at 404-679-3114 or by email at planning@dca.state.ga.us*

Industrialized Buildings Program

Incustrialized buildings are houses and commercial buildings that are mass-produced in factories and then transported to building sites to be installed on a site-built foundation. Because many components of these buildings are already enclosed in the buildings' walls when they reach the building sites, local building officials cannot inspect them. The Industrialized Buildings Program provides for the inspection of these factory-built units to ensure that they meet the state's construction standards regardless of where they are built. The manufacturers must obtain DCA approval for their manufacturing systems and quality control procedures. DCA then contracts with independent engineers and construction experts to inspect these systems and procedures, and to inspect the industrialized buildings during manufacture. Manufactured homes (sometimes called mobile homes) are not covered by this program. They are regulated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Contact: *Construction Codes and Industrialized Buildings Section at 404-679-3118 or by email at* IB@dca.state.ga.us

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Community Development Block Grant Program

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program provides federal funds for housing improvement, local infrastructure such as water and sewer lines, economic development projects, and community facilities such as health centers and Head Start centers. Projects funded under this program must largely benefit low and moderate-income persons. Only cities and counties in Georgia that do not receive CDBG funds directly from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development may apply for these grants from DCA. Grants are awarded through a competitive process one time each year. Local matching funds may be required, depending on the grant amount.

Contact: *Office of Grant Administration at 404-679-3176 or by email at* CDBG@dca.state.ga.us

Community HOME Investment Program

The Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) makes federal HOME funds available to local governments for housing activities designed to benefit low- and moderate-income persons. Funds may be used for the production, acquisition or rehabilitation of housing. CHIP funds may also be used in conjunction with CDBG funds. Only cities and counties in Georgia that do not receive HOME funds directly from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development may apply for these grants from DCA. Grants are awarded through a competitive process one time each year. The CHIP program is designed to encourage private investment in housing. Competitive applications should demonstrate leveraging of private funds.

Contact: *Office of Grant Administration at 404-679-3167 or by email at* CHIP@dca.state.ga.us

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Training and Technical Assistance

DCA provides a range of training and technical assistance opportunities related to housing. Applicants' workshops are available for many of the grant and loan programs offered by the Department. Readers interested in training on a specific grant or loan program's application process should contact the responsible office listed in this publication. A general housing course for city officials is offered at least once a year as part of the Georgia Municipal Association training schedule. The Georgia Academy for Economic Development also includes housing information as part of its curriculum. In addition, special seminars, workshops and technical assistance can be arranged for community leaders on a limited basis. The Department's regional staff provides a local resource of information about DCA's programs and areas of expertise.

Contact: *Housing Finance Division at 404-327-6855 or by email at* communityhousing@dca.state.ga.us

Home Buyer Education

Funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, DCA has contracted with local Consumer Credit Counseling Service agencies to provide individual home buyer counseling services. The counseling is intended to enable each household to make an informed decision about purchasing a home, considering their own financial and personal situation, and to keep their homes once the purchase is complete. DCA has also contracted with a number of nonprofit agencies to offer Home Buyer Education Seminars to groups around the state. With the help of the Latin American Association, DCA's homeownership booklet is available in Spanish.

Contact: *Office of Single Family Housing at 404-679-0624 or by email at housing@dca.state.ga.us*

Home Buyer Mortgage Program

The Home Buyer Program provides low-interest rate mortgage loans for borrowers with moderate incomes and modest assets. Except for targeted rural counties and some urban census tracts, borrowers must be first-time home buyers. The loans are 30-year fixed rate mortgages with interest rates that are typically 1 percent below the market rate. Loans are originated under FHA, VA, conventional or USDA/Rural Development guidelines. Homes purchased under the program cannot exceed maximum sales price limits. Application for these loans is made through a network of participating local lenders across the state. The required down payment will vary according to loan type, but is generally 3 percent of the sales price. A home purchased under this program must be the borrower's primary residence. Mortgage payments are generally made to State Home Mortgage, which is a part of DCA.

Contact: *The Office of Single Family Housing at 404-679-4847 or by email at housing@dca.state.ga.us*

OwnHOME Down Payment Loan

The OwnHOME Program provides 0 percent interest loans to help first-time home buyers with the required down payment, closing costs and prepaid items associated with purchasing a home. Generally OwnHOME loans are available only if the borrower also uses the Home Buyer mortgage program described above. OwnHOME loans are made as delayed repayment second mortgage loans of up to $5,000. Delayed repayment means that the loan is repaid when the home is sold, transferred or re-financed or if the home is no longer the borrower's primary residence. OwnHOME borrowers must provide a portion of their own funds for the down payment, closing costs or prepaid items. The required borrower contribution varies based on the purchase price of the home. Borrowers must complete a home buyer education seminar. OwnHOME loans are available from local lenders participating in the Home Buyer program.

Contact: *The Office of Single Family Housing at 404 679 4847 or by email at housing@dca.state.ga.us*

Bond Allocation Program

Federal tax law allows for tax-exempt government bonds to be issued for certain types of nongovernmental (i.e., private) activities. The advantage of this type of bond is that it provides lower interest financing for many kinds of projects. The amount of private-activity tax-exempt bonds available each year for all categories is limited. Allocating the use of these bonds is the responsibility of each state government. In Georgia, DCA is responsible for the administration of the Georgia Allocation System. There are several general categories of allowable use including housing, student loans, and manufacturing and processing facilities. Bonds used for multifamily housing (rental developments) must set aside a portion of the units for low to moderate income families. Rental developments financed with these bonds are also eligible for state and federal housing credits without having to compete in the annual tax credit application cycle. Bonds used for home-ownership must create cost-effective mortgages for first-time and moderate income home buyers.

Contact: *Executive Office at 404-679-4940 or by email at bonds@dca.state.ga.us*

HOME CHDO Predevelopment Loan Program

The HOME CHDO Predevelopment Loan Program provides interest free loans for up to 24 months to nonprofit organizations that have been designated by DCA as Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs). This HOME-funded program was created for CHDOs that plan to become owners of new or rehabilitated rental housing for low and very low income tenants. The loans help CHDOs prepare complete and comprehensive development financing applications to either DCA's HOME Rental Housing Loan or Permanent Supportive Housing Loan programs. Funds may be used for costs such as market studies, title search costs, environmental review and appraisals. The predevelopment loans are repaid from the proceeds of the project's construction financing.

Contact: *The Office of Housing Planning and Administration at 404-679-0680 or by email at nonprofithousing@dca.state.ga.us*

HOME Rental Housing Loan Program

The HOME Rental Housing Loan Program provides loans to help develop affordable rental housing. Funded by a portion of Georgia's federal HOME grant, the program offers very low interest construction-to-permanent loans with flexible repayment terms, usually over 20 years. This program helps lower the loan payments, making reduced rents feasible. Owners agree to keep the property in good condition and rent the HOME-funded units to low income residents for at least 20 years. Loan funds may be used for rehabilitation and new construction, or adaptive reuse of existing buildings for rental housing. The HOME loan program may be used independently or with tax credits, depending on economic feasibility and market conditions. Used in combination with tax credits, the HOME loans can push rents down, making the housing affordable to lower income tenants. A percentage of the HOME funds under this program is set aside for nonprofit organizations qualified by the DCA as Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs). Developments in areas that receive their own allocation of HOME funds from the federal government are not eligible for this program, unless they are sponsored by CHDOs or serve tenants with special needs.

Contact: *The Office of Affordable Housing at 404-679-0648 or by email at rentalhousing@dca.state.ga.us*

Housing Tax Credit Program

The Housing Tax Credit Program provides a 10-year federal and state tax incentive to attract private investment for the development of affordable rental housing. The money raised by sale of the tax credits reduces the size of the mortgage needed for the development, making reduced rents feasible. Owners agree to keep the property in good condition and rent all or some of the units to low income residents for at least 15 years. DCA encourages mixed-income developments and those that support community development objectives. The annual application process for the credits is very competitive. A percentage of the tax credits is set aside for qualified nonprofit organizations. Tax credits are also available on a non-competitive basis for multifamily residential developments financed with tax-exempt private activity bonds. Eligible activities include acquisition and/or substantial rehabilitation of existing rental housing and new construction.

Contact: *The Office of Affordable Housing at 404-679-0647 or by email at rentalhousing@dca.state.ga.us*

Landlord Tenant Hotline and Handbook

Georgia Legal Services Program handles this program for DCA. It provides answers to frequently asked questions from both renters and landlords. Even experienced property owners often need to know more about their rights and responsibilities under Georgia law. Tenants often need help understanding lease provisions or how to handle unusual situations. Information can be obtained by calling the Hotline or going online to read the Handbook at the DCA website at: www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/landlord/contents.html.

Contact: *The Georgia Landlord-Tenant Hotline at 1-800-369-4706.*

Rural Rental Housing Development Fund

The Rural Rental Housing Development Fund provides loans to rural public housing authorities to construct and manage affordable rental units. Funds must be used for developments of 10 or fewer rental units. The program provides a combination of construction-to-permanent loans and grants. The loan portion is repaid over a period of 20 to 30 years at an interest rate of 0 to 1 percent. The program also provides an opportunity for these agencies to gain development experience and training. Participating public housing authorities are required to provide cash equity equal to the level of operating reserves required by underwriting. A Request for Qualifications for this program is issued one time each year. Selected agencies are then provided with education on the housing development process to assist in their preparation of complete development financing applications. Public housing authorities from across Georgia may participate in this program; however, the housing constructed must be located outside of the following urban counties: Bibb, Chatham, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Dougherty, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Muscogee, Richmond, and Rockdale.

Contact: *Office of Housing Planning & Administration at 404-327-6881 or by email at nonprofithousing@dca.state.ga.us*

Section 8 Rental Assistance

Section 8 Rental Assistance is a program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The program helps low and very low income people pay rent in the private rental housing market. DCA determines if a person is eligible to participate in the program. People who participate in the program normally pay 30 percent of their monthly income as their portion of the monthly rent and utilities. DCA pays the remainder of the rent directly to the landlord. There are program requirements regarding the maximum rent allowable and the quality of the rental unit. In some special cases, rental assistance vouchers are tied to a particular apartment complex (project-based Section 8). There is typically a waiting list for this program. DCA's rental assistance offices are located in Albany, Athens, Carrollton, Eastman, and Waycross. DCA administers the program in 149 of Georgia's 159 counties. The remaining 10 counties are served by local agencies.

Contact: *Section 8 Rental Assistance Office at 404-679-0643 or by email at Section8@dca.state.ga.us*

Emergency Shelter Grant Program

The Emergency Shelter Grant Program provides grant funds to nonprofit organizations and local governments from the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless Commission and Emergency Shelter Grants Program funds allocated to the state by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Grant funds must be used to provide shelter and essential services to homeless persons. Eligible activities include emergency shelter and essential services for the homeless, transitional housing, homeless prevention programs, acquisition, construction, and/or renovation of facilities that serve the homeless persons and technical assistance to organizations involved in these activities. General funding limits are set for each of the authorized activities. Applicants are typically expected to provide 60 percent of the cost of each activity. A 25 percent matching share is expected for participation in the facility development program. Most of the funds are allocated in a one time per year application process. Some funds are retained for allocations to meet urgent needs as they arise during the year.

Contact: *Office of the State Housing Trust Fund at 404-679-4942 or by email at HomelessPrograms@dca.state.ga.us*

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS

The Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program is designed to provide housing and supportive services to low-income persons with HIV-related needs. Local governments and nonprofit organizations in the 139 Georgia counties outside the Atlanta MSA are eligible to apply for these federal grant funds. Funds may be used for housing, information about housing and fair housing, rental assistance, homelessness prevention, general case management, housing operating subsidies, technical assistance, and supportive services such as health, mental health, nutritional assistance, day care, and personal assistance. Development activities may also be funded through this program and can include acquisition, new construction and/or rehabilitation. Funds are generally allocated during a once a year application process. Applications received after the deadline are processed on a funds available basis.

Contact: *Office of the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless at 404-679-0651 or by email at HOPWA@dca.state.ga.us*

Permanent Supportive Housing Program

The Permanent Supportive Housing Program helps nonprofit organizations provide quality affordable rental housing with supportive services to non-elderly special needs populations. The program couples the state's federal HOME funds with monies from the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless to offer construction-to-permanent loans. In certain situations DCA will also provide Section 8 vouchers to increase affordability for targeted special needs populations. Applications may be received at any time during the year on a first-come, first-served basis. Funds may be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction, or adaptive reuse of existing buildings for rental housing. Non-elderly special needs tenants include the homeless, persons with disabilities, persons with alcohol or other drug addictions, and persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Contact *Office of Housing Planning and Administration at 404-327-6881 or by email at nonprofithousing@dca.state.ga.us*

Shelter Plus Care Program

The Shelter Plus Care (S+C) Program provides affordable housing with supportive services for homeless people with disabilities and their families. Generally, the individuals served by this program have disabilities associated with mental illness, addiction disorders, and/or AIDS. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development funds the rental assistance portion of the Shelter Plus Care program. The supportive services, most frequently funded through the Georgia Department of Human Resources, are provided by the Grantee. Annual applications for the Shelter Plus Care funds are submitted through the HUD Homeless Continuum of Care Planning and Application process. Contact DCA to determine the appropriate continuum of care for your proposal.

Contact *Office of the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless at 404-679-05694 or by email at ShelterCare@dca.state.ga.us*

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