



**Georgia
Interagency
Homeless
Coordination
Council**

2006 Annual Progress Report



Equal Housing Opportunity



Mike Beatty
COMMISSIONER
Department of Community Affairs

B.J. Walker
COMMISSIONER
Department of Human Resources

May 15, 2007

The Honorable Governor Sonny Perdue
Office of the Governor
State Capitol Building
Atlanta, Georgia 30334-0900

Dear Governor Perdue:

The Georgia Interagency Homeless Coordination Council was convened by your Executive Order of February 11, 2004. Since that time, the Council has worked to address the needs of families and individuals experiencing homelessness in Georgia. We are pleased to present the 2006 Calendar Year Annual Report to the Office of the Governor for your consideration.

The Council is a wonderful example of interagency cooperation as we seek to coordinate resources and find solutions to the challenge of homelessness. The past year has seen notable results in each of the six primary goals that were originally laid out in Georgia's Homeless Action Plan.

It has been our privilege to serve as co-chairs of this Council and to work collaboratively with so many others from across the state in the service of Georgia's neediest citizens. We look forward to continuing the work of the Council.

Sincerely,

Mike Beatty
Commissioner
Department of Community Affairs

Sincerely,

B.J. Walker
Commissioner
Department of Human Resources



Georgia Interagency Homeless Coordination Council 2006 Annual Progress Report

Introduction and Background

Recent years have seen the emergence of new strategies to address the needs of people who are homeless. First and foremost has been the recognition that only a truly cooperative effort can be successful. Federal, state, and local resources working together can mobilize resources and foster creativity. The members of the Georgia Interagency Homeless Coordination Council (GIHCC) work together to coordinate resources and find cooperative solutions to the challenge of homelessness. GIHCC is an approach that fits perfectly with the Governor's TEAM Georgia concept, aimed at making Georgia the nation's best managed state - in this case, a better managed state government in the service of Georgia's neediest citizens.

In November 2001, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced a series of Policy Academies designed to help State and local policymakers improve access to mainstream services for people who are homeless. Georgia applied for and was accepted to participate in the April 2002 Academy on chronic homelessness. By December 2002, the Georgia policy team developed a Homeless Action Plan to End Homelessness in Ten Years. Since that time, Georgia has participated in an additional Academy on improving access to mainstream services for families with children experiencing homelessness (held in April, 2005). Additionally in 2002, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness was revitalized. One of its missions was to foster the creation of state interagency councils. These events, coupled with the recognition here in Georgia that an interagency council would be essential to creating a statewide plan and collaborative homelessness initiatives, led to the creation of the GIHCC by Executive Order of Governor Sonny Purdue on February 11, 2004.



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This report seeks to track the progress that the GIHCC initiative has made in achieving its goals in calendar year 2006.

Progress on Goals

Goal One

Expand access to and use of the Federal mainstream housing and support service programs by homeless families and chronically homeless individuals. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) identified mainstream service programs include Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Workforce Investment Act, Food Stamps, Adult Literacy, Vocational Rehabilitation and Veterans Benefits. Mainstream housing programs include the affordable and supportive rental and homeownership programs administered by HUD, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and local agencies.

2006 Accomplishments

- Implementation of the SSI/SSDI Homeless Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance Initiative. In 2006, 4 members of the New Horizon's Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) Team went to Washington, DC to participate in the 4-day SOAR train-the-trainers program. Between April and December 2006, 250 front line case managers representing Georgia's Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), TANF, and Division of Mental Health, Development Disabilities and Addictive Diseases (MHDDAD) participated in one of ten (10) SOAR trainings across the state to learn how to assist homeless individuals with Social Security

Administration (SSA) disability applications. Georgia's Disability Adjudication Services (DAS) developed a "homeless unit" to handle persons' applications assisted by SOAR case managers. Plans to expand SOAR in 2007 include additional training, technical assistance, and collaboration led by a PATH funded SOAR Project Manager.

- The first annual Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Users Conference was held in Columbus on March 14th and 15th. Over 100 participants from homeless service provider agencies around the state attended. The conference provided training, technical assistance, and strategic planning on issues related to the implementation of a statewide HMIS.
- The Georgia Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration have an ongoing project with the Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless to expedite disability claims for the homeless population in Savannah. This year the project expanded to include on-site applications and consultation at the JC Lewis Health Center. For the six month period ending in February, 2007, a total of 74 individuals were served.
- The Macon Homeless Coalition sponsored a Regional Resource Fair and Stand Down Day in November, 2006 and the Augusta Task Force for the Homeless held a Regional Resource Fair in June and a Homeless Stand Down in October, 2006.
- The State's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), Pathways Compass, includes a Mainstream Benefits Assessment tool as part of the system. This tool can leverage the data entered into HMIS and, upon request, present an assessment of the client's likely eligibility or ineligibility for Medicaid, TANF, SSI, CHIP, Food Stamps, and Veterans Benefits.



250 front line case managers from various divisions of Georgia's Department of Human Resources participated in SOAR training in 2006

Goal Two

Provide supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals and families that is both affordable and appropriate for the delivery of supportive services.

2006 Accomplishments

- The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) housing search web site, GeorgiaHousingSearch.org, and the companion site, AtlantaHousingSearch.com, merged to become a single site, improving efficiency and access to affordable housing across the state. Service providers for the homeless, as well as the general public, can use this service to find rental housing units based on price, numbers of bedrooms, available amenities, access to mass transportation, and accessibility features available. By the end of 2006, the web site had 36,785 units listed and averaged 3,300 searches per day.
- DCA developed language for the Qualified Application Plan (QAP) for tax credit housing which would give developers an incentive to develop units targeted to special needs tenants, including homeless persons. Public hearings were held on the proposed QAP in 2006 and those provisions were included for 2007. DCA also allocated up to 50 project-based Housing Choice Vouchers for these set-aside units that will be allocated to the highest scoring applications receiving a tax credit award.
- Two new supportive housing facilities opened their doors to residents in 2006 Maxwell House in Augusta and The Pines in Valdosta. Both projects were funded using DCA's Permanent Supportive Housing Program. During 2006, DCA continued to provide direct technical assistance to eight potential applicants working to create permanent supportive housing in Georgia through this program.
- DCA held a Shelter+Care (S+C) and Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) training program for approximately 100 participants at Jekyll Island on January 23-26. The workshop focused on program regulations and administration, case management, and related issues.
- Since 2005, the DHR-DCA Housing Choice partnership has served a total of 273 families and individuals that were in need of affordable housing. DHR and DCA staff met on March 1, 2007 to discuss the program's progress and strategies for building on the program's success. The Housing Choice partnership serves individuals with special needs, including clients who were formerly homeless.



GeorgiaHousingSearch.org listed over 36,000 affordable rental properties across Georgia and averaged 3,300 searches per day

- The Supportive Housing Council of the Regional Commission on Homelessness continues its work to implement the Five Year Supportive Housing Plan for the Atlanta Region with regular planning and coordination meetings of service providers, housing providers and governmental officials.

- There continues to be a close partnership between Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR) community-based mental health services and Balance of State Continuum of Care subsidized supportive housing units funded through Shelter Plus Care (S+C) contracts from the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). In 2006, 19 community service boards participated with a total of 473 contracted units.



DCA and DHR's community-based mental health services partnered to provide 473 contracted supported housing units through the Shelter+Care program.



The Atlanta Development Authority allocated almost \$7 million from its Homeless Opportunity Bond Fund to create 923 housing units - 193 of those for permanent supportive housing

- The Atlanta Development Authority created a \$22 million Homeless Opportunity Fund in 2005 to support the development of additional permanent supportive housing units and women and children assessment centers. Almost \$7 million of that fund was approved for projects in 2006, creating 923 housing units - 193 of those are permanent supportive housing units - and leveraging almost \$57 million in funds from other sources. An additional \$1.5 million was approved from the fund for construction and installation of automatic public toilets.

- Continuation of 2005 commitment of 500 project based Housing Choice Vouchers over five years by the Atlanta Housing Authority to promote the development of permanent supportive housing units through the programs of the Regional Commission on Homelessness.

Goal Three

Develop and adopt state policies to end the discharge of institutionalized individuals (to include discharge from correction facilities, public health or mental hospitals, treatment facilities, foster care, or juvenile justice programs) directly to homeless facilities which are unprepared and unable to meet the supportive service needs of the individual.

2006 Accomplishments

- 2006 saw the opening of the Ben & Bettye Barnes Center and the construction of the Don & Kaye Kole Center, both in Savannah. The Barnes Center has 10 beds and the Kole Center will have 6 beds. The two Centers provide permanent supportive housing to women with disabilities
- Working cooperatively, the State Board of Pardons and Paroles and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs are implementing the Georgia Re-entry Partnership Housing (RPH) Program. In 2006, the program provided housing placements to 133 parolees, utilizing 28 approved housing providers. Through the RPH, the state has avoided over \$4 million in incarceration costs (based on cost from RPH date to max out date) and parolees have obtained safe transitional housing.
- The Department of Human Resource's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) initiative trains police officers to support pre-booking diversion of persons with mental illness from incarceration into treatment services. DHR contracts with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) to coordinate the CIT training. The goal is to have 20% of all police officers trained within one year. Through March 2007, 1,100 police officers had been trained and approximately 75 jurisdictions had trained officers.



The Georgia Re-entry Partnership Housing Program provided housing placements to 133 parolees, allowing the state to avoid over \$4 million in incarceration costs



1,100 police officers in about 75 jurisdictions have been trained through the Crisis Intervention Team initiative to support getting persons with mental illness into treatment instead going to jail

- State behavioral health hospitals are utilizing Person Centered Planning for mental health consumers as a part of the State's Olmstead Compliance. DCA provides training on this method for all Shelter Plus Care providers.
- The Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program is operating through cooperative arrangements with the Georgia Department of Corrections, the Department of Veteran's Affairs and the Department of Labor.
- St. Vincent DePaul Respite Center in Augusta is operating to provide appropriate shelter and care for homeless individuals ready for discharge from Augusta hospitals.
- The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) formed a collaborative with Department of Corrections (DOC) in 2005 with the goal of reducing homelessness and recidivism for the re-entry population. DFCS staff provided education to staff from Metro State Prison (female facility) in an effort to assist the inmates scheduled for release access DFCS mainstream services. Appointments for DFCS services were scheduled for referred inmates shortly after their release. In the fall of 2006, Child Support Services (CSS) joined the collaboration and services were expanded to the other two female facilities (Arrendale and Pulaski State Prisons). DFCS and CSS provide education to the DOC staff and the inmate population at the facilities. Recently the MHDDAD and Department of Public Health decided to join the collaboration to provide additional services and support. The process is still in a growing and learning phase. Local county departments are now engaged and the program will be transitioned to the local level. Child Support Services Fatherhood Initiative is currently working with the male transitions centers.
- More than 52,000 youth pass through Georgia's Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) each year, making it one of the largest systems in the nation. To address discharge issues, DJJ has partnered with other state agencies to develop a "front-end" diversion model for youth with substance use and related problems. Additionally,



DJJ has developed a Youth Offender Reentry Plan (YORP) to provide substance abuse and reentry services to sentenced juveniles ages 14 to 21, returning to the community from a DJJ facility. The program has developed the capacity to serve 525 substance abusing youth offenders over four years. The services are provided in the Atlanta region, where the largest numbers of youthful offenders return following incarceration. In the fall of 2006, 155 youth were being served by 11 different service providers.

- In previous years, an interagency committee worked to design a transition protocol for youth with serious mental illness ageing out of state foster care. In 2002, the Match Transition Protocol was adopted by the Department of Community Affairs, the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Labor, the Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Family and Children Services, and the Department of Juvenile Justice. The committee continued to meet and developed best practices support services plan and housing development outlines for permanent supportive housing for the same population. In 2006, those efforts came to fruition with the acquisition of property and a \$5 million development proposal, currently under consideration, for a housing development and program to serve this population.

- Working under contract with the Department of Human Resources (DHR), Georgia Rehabilitation Outreach Inc. (GRO) works with persons with a diagnosis of mental illness who are incarcerated in Fulton County and City of Atlanta jails. The Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) program had 122 clients admitted to Fulton County and City of Atlanta jails in Fiscal Year 2006; with an average of 634 jail days/quarter. GRO is working closely with the chief judges and administrators of the municipal, state and superior courts to develop effective diversion plans to reduce these numbers in Fiscal Year 2007.

Goal Four

Develop replicable local community planning model(s) which demonstrate how integrated housing and service delivery strategies can be implemented at the local level for homeless persons. Models should reflect Guiding Principles in areas of collaboration, governance, authority and finances.

2006 Accomplishments

- In November 2006, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for development of a methodology for a Balance of the State (152 counties) count of unsheltered persons to be conducted in January 2008. The methodology envisioned will employ sampling techniques. This count, added to counts conducted in the other six Continuum of Care, will provide a statewide count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons in Georgia.

- 2006 saw the start of construction of the J.C. Lewis Behavioral Health Center in Savannah on Union Mission's health care campus. In 2006, the Behavioral Health program served 4,112 individuals.
- The Georgia Department of Labor is engaged in two ongoing partnerships with Samaritan House and Trinity Community Ministries. Both of these outreach initiatives are geared to aiding homeless persons in accessing job search and employment assistance. The Department of Labor has committed to supporting each transitional center with professional staff that provide a variety of services and resources including: job readiness and interviewing workshops, occupational and skills assessment, resume development, on-site job fairs, job matching and referral, employability skills training, and job finding books and DVDs.
- The Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) has developed plans and procedures in conjunction with the Department of Human Resources and non-governmental organizations including the American Red Cross for the evacuation of individuals with special needs to safe and appropriate emergency shelters in the event of emergencies requiring the evacuation of the public from locations under threat.
- GEMA has been selected as one of four states in the nation to work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop an Evacuee Support Plan in the event that Georgia is asked to serve as a "host" state for evacuees fleeing disaster impacted areas in other Southeastern States.



The Georgia Department of Labor has partnered with Samaritan House and Trinity Community Ministries to aid homeless persons in job searches and employment assistance

- The Georgia Department of Community Affairs' continued its funding and support of the Pathways Connections Homeless Information Management System (HMIS) statewide implementation program including local community user committees. The Pathways Community Network added more than 30 agencies to the HMIS, with more than 200 agencies across the state now participating. One way in which participation was increased was by restructuring the sliding scale fee structure to address objections of larger nonparticipating agencies. In 2006, Pathways HMIS introduced a new, one page streamlined intake process to make data entry easier and developed Java security applet to comply with new national HMIS security rules.

- The Georgia Department of Community Affairs issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a survey of HMIS users. That RFP resulted in a contract with Kennesaw State University's Burruss Institute for a telephone survey of HMIS user agencies. The survey focuses on use of the system, training, development, and customer satisfaction. The survey will be conducted in February and early March, 2007. Results from the survey will be used to guide improvements in Pathways HMIS.
- The Georgia Department of Community Affairs sponsors the Continuum of Care Planning strategy work group that explores and promotes best practices between the state and local Continuum of Care Plans.
- Cobb County is working closely with the Sheriff and the local jail to enumerate the number of homeless discharged each year, and to establish procedures and contact points for the discharge of homeless individuals from jail. Cobb County's hospital discharge planning group, comprised of service providers and health care providers, has successfully implemented discharge procedures for homeless patients. Harmony House, which opened in August 2006, provides comprehensive case management and support services for up to 6 individuals with an average stay of 30-60 days. An on-site staff member oversees clients along with a dedicated case manager. The program had served 10 clients from its opening through January 2007. The first program graduate has transitioned to independent apartment living and maintains steady employment. Other clients have transitioned to long-term residential substance abuse programs.



The Georgia Emergency Management Agency has developed evacuation plans for individuals with special needs and is participating in a national Evacuee Support Plan

- Fulton County has budgeted for 15 case workers in 2007, including five who will operate out of the Fulton County jail to provide discharge services for the chronically homeless.
- A committee of Cobb County community stakeholders hosted the county's first Homeless Veterans Stand Down in November 2006. The event served 61 homeless clients with a wide range of service needs including assessments by case managers.
- DCA recognized Homeless and Special Needs best practice developments at the Magnolia Awards event in November.

- A delegation from Georgia's Departments of Community Affairs and Human Resources traveled to Tennessee in December to learn about that state's program to increase the supply of supportive housing.

Goal Five

Engagement of the State leadership (Department Heads, Legislature and Governor's Office) in the adoption of strategies, allocation of resources and the implementation of these and future recommendations of the Council.

2006 Accomplishments

- Following the work of the Governor's Commission for a New Georgia, the Georgia Department of Human Services is working to implement the recommendations of the Task Force on Community Care for Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability.
- The Georgia Interagency Homeless Coordination Council continued its work, meeting quarterly, and building active cooperative efforts to address the needs of Georgia's homeless population, with a special emphasis on the chronically homeless.

Goal Six

Take the necessary actions to fully utilize and maximize the available Federal, State, public and private funds available to address the needs of the homeless and to meet the goal of ending chronic homelessness in ten years.

2006 Accomplishments

- In the 2006 Continuum of Care funding competition, the seven (7) Georgia Continua of Care were allocated \$24.3 million in funding for the Supportive Housing and Shelter Plus Care programs, exceeding its pro rata share by almost \$7 million dollars. The seven Continua also received an additional \$3.6 million in HUD Emergency Shelter Grant funds. The submission of seven Continuum of Care plans provided for statewide coverage.
- By the end of 2006, 318 units of housing had been created through DCA's Permanent Supportive Housing Program (PSHP). The PSHP developments are Millennium Center, The Pines, Hearthstone Landing, Grove Park Village, Maxwell House, Trinity House and Hope House. These developments used a combination of federal HOME funds, State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless, Housing Tax Credits, Foundations and other sources. Over \$1 million in Section 8 rental assistance and over \$2.5 million in support services are tied to these units. Proposals for some 260 additional units are under review and are expected to be approved and go into service within two years.



Georgia's 7 Continua of Care were allocated \$24.3 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for supportive housing programs and an additional \$3.6 million in emergency shelter grants

*Grove Park Village
Macon, Georgia*





Participating Organizations

Georgia Association for Primary Health Care
Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
Georgia Coalition to End Homelessness
Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Georgia Department of Community Health
Georgia Department of Corrections
Georgia Department of Education
Georgia Department of Human Resources
Georgia Department of Labor
Georgia Department of Public Safety
Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education
Georgia Department of Veterans Services
Georgia Emergency Management Agency
Georgia Family Connections Partnership
Georgia Office of the Governor
Georgia Office of Planning and Budget
Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles
Georgia Technology Authority
Union Mission of Savannah
United Way of Metro Atlanta