

HEALTHCARE AND HOUSING (H²) SYSTEMS INTEGRATION INITIATIVE

ATHENS, GEORGIA

Homeless Housing Resources

The information in this resource guide is intended primarily to provide people working in health care with basic information about homeless assistance and housing programs and resources. It is also intended to provide context for housing, health care, and service providers for discussions on gaps in needed housing and services that support housing stability.

The following resources are covered:

- HUD Resources
 - Vouchers
 - HOME Program
 - Housing Trust Fund
 - Continuum of Care (CoC) Program
 - Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)
 - Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program
 - VA Supportive Housing (VASH) Programs
- Other Federal Resources
 - Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)
 - SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Program
- Georgia Housing Resources, including Permanent Supportive Housing Programs

HOMELESS HOUSING RESOURCES

Financial support for housing for low-income people tends to fall into two main categories: support to help cover “hard” costs (such as construction and rehabilitation) and support to cover more flexible “soft” costs, such as vouchers, operating costs, and services. Moreover, resources are often focused on a particular population (e.g. people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, people experiencing homelessness, veterans).

HUD Resources

HUD provides a variety of resources to states, local governments, and nonprofit housing agencies to provide access to or in order to develop affordable housing.

This information is presented primarily to provide health care providers with a general overview of federal resources available for affordable housing and supportive service providers, as well as the clients they serve.

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Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program¹

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program provides rental assistance for low-income individuals and families. The HCV Program provides “tenant-based” rental assistance under Section 8 by providing low-income households with a voucher they can use to rent any private apartment that meets program guidelines. Section 8 also offers “project-based” rental assistance, which provide rental housing to low-income households in privately owned and managed rental units, but in which the subsidy stays with the building.

There are 188 Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) administering HCVs and public housing programs throughout Georgia. The Athens Housing Authority serves Athens-Clarke County and administers only a public housing program.

Special Purpose Vouchers²

Special purpose vouchers have been appropriated by Congress exclusively for people with disabilities. They are an invaluable resource for meeting the housing needs of people with disabilities because they must be set aside for people with disabilities even when they turn over and are re-issued. Vouchers are targeted exclusively to people with disabilities through the following programs:

Five-Year Mainstream Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

These vouchers are set aside exclusively for people with disabilities. They are funded through the Section 811 tenant-based rental assistance program (25% of the program’s appropriations have been used for tenant-based rental assistance). PHAs³ received 5-year annual contributions contracts.

Rental Assistance for Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities (“NED” Vouchers)

Over the past decade, HUD has also awarded over 55,000 other vouchers targeted to non-elderly people with disabilities, now referred to as NED vouchers. There are 5 PHAs in Georgia that

¹ Data from HUD PHA Contact Information http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts and HUD Housing Authority Profile database <https://pic.hud.gov/pic/haprofiles/haprofilelist.asp>

² <http://www.tacinc.org/knowledge-resources/vouchers-database/?state=GA>

³ Non-profit disability organizations were also eligible to apply for Section 811-funded Mainstream vouchers.

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receive NED and Five-Year Mainstream vouchers; Athens Housing Authority has not received any special purpose vouchers as of August 2015.

PHAs in Georgia with Special Purpose Vouchers

PHA	NED	Five-Year Mainstream
GA Department of Community Affairs	0	75
Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta	175	50
Housing Authority of the City of Decatur	0	75
Northwest Georgia Housing Authority	0	20
Rockmart Housing Authority	0	58
TOTAL	175	278

Although vouchers are an invaluable resource for helping homeless and low-income individuals with disabilities, PHAs often have substantial waiting lists for applicants to receive HCV and special purpose vouchers; lists may be also closed when the wait for housing becomes unreasonable.

HOME Investment Partnerships Program⁴

The federal government created the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) in 1990. The HOME program is a formula grant of federal housing funds given to states and localities (referred to as “participating jurisdictions” or PJs). As of December 2014, Georgia has 13 participating PJs, including Athens-Clarke County.

HOME funds can be used to:

- Build, buy, and renovate rental housing;
- Finance homeownership opportunities;
- Repair homes, including making buildings physically accessible; or
- Provide rental subsidies to eligible households.

⁴ https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/reportmanagement/published/HOME_Dash_PL_ATHE-GA_GA_20150630.pdf

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Since 1992, the Athens-Clarke County PJ has received \$16,682,428 in HOME funds and produced 484 rental units. The Athens-Clarke County PJ has not utilized HOME funds for tenant-based rental assistance.

National Housing Trust Fund (HTF)⁵

The federal government created the Housing Trust Fund in 2008. It has not been operating due to insufficient funding, but funds are now being set aside. The HTF program is a formula grant of federal funds given to states and state-designated entities. Each state determines its priority housing need for production or preservation, primarily of rental housing, that is affordable and available to extremely low-income households. A state must use at least 80 percent of each annual grant for rental housing; up to 10 percent for homeownership; and up to 10 percent for the grantee's reasonable administrative and planning costs.

During 2015, states will begin developing their HTF Allocation Plans and solicit input from their constituents. States will submit these plans to HUD along with their 2016 Annual Action Plans. HUD anticipates that grantees will receive their HTF allocations by Summer 2016. **Georgia's designated HTF grantee is the Georgia Housing and Finance Authority.**

HTF funds can be used for:

- New construction of rental and homebuyer units;
- Acquisition or acquisition/rehabilitation of rental and homebuyer units; or
- Operating costs for rental projects (up to one third of annual grant).

Information on Georgia's Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless is presented later in this Worksheet.

Continuum of Care (CoC) Program⁶

Georgia has 9 active Continuums of Care (CoCs), including the Athens-Clarke County CoC:

- In January 2014, Georgia had **9,256 total beds** dedicated for homeless persons year-round. **143 of the total beds** in Georgia are in the Athens-Clarke County CoC.

⁵ <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/htf/>

⁶ 2014 HIC Count, available at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3031/pit-and-hic-data-since-2007/>

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About **51.5%** of the total beds in Georgia were in emergency shelters/safe havens and **48.5%** were in transitional housing programs. In Athens-Clarke County, **59.4%** of beds were in emergency shelters/safe havens and **40.6%** were in transitional housing programs.

Continuum of Care	2014 Homeless Housing Inventory			Permanent Housing Inventory		
	Total Year-Round Beds (ES, SH, TH)	Inventory by Type		Total (PSH, RRH)	Inventory by Type	
		Emergency Shelter/Safe Haven	Transitional Housing		Permanent Supportive Housing	Rapid Re-housing
Atlanta CoC	3747	2027	1720	1826	1677	149
Georgia Balance of State CoC	2756	1526	1230	2357	2134	223
Fulton County CoC	365	56	309	352	336	16
Athens-Clarke County CoC	143	85	58	238	131	107
Augusta-Richmond County CoC	365	215	150	166	166	0
Columbus-Muscogee/Russell County CoC	226	184	42	168	168	0
Marietta/Cobb County CoC	401	119	282	284	276	8
Savannah/Chatham County CoC	637	304	333	675	675	0
DeKalb County CoC	616	249	367	1378	1360	18
State Total	9256	4765	4491	7444	6923	521

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Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)⁷

The Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program provides grants to states and localities for emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing for the homeless. ESG funds can be used for street outreach, emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, rapid re-housing assistance, and HMIS, as well as administrative activities. ESG funds may also be used to fund Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Programs (HPRP). In 2014, grantees in Georgia received ESG grants totaling \$6,177,815, including nearly \$4 million to the state of Georgia itself.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH AIDS (HOPWA)⁸

HOPWA funds are awarded through the Consolidated Plan as a block grant to states and larger metropolitan areas based on their incidences of AIDS and competitively through an annual Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). HOPWA funds may be used for a wide range of housing, social services, program planning, and development costs. In 2014, the State of Georgia received over \$21 million.

HOPWA – Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (2013)

	Households Served	HOPWA Expenditures
City of Atlanta		
Tenant-Based Rental Assistance	335	\$973,115.58
Subsidized Permanent Housing	248	\$1,844,705.14
Transitional/Short-term Facilities	755	\$1,062,268.36
Short-Term Rent, Mortgage & Utility Assistance	620	\$500,933.64
Permanent Housing Placement Services	270	\$152,130.73
TOTAL	2228	\$4,533,153.45

⁷ https://www.hudexchange.info/grantees/cpd-allocations-awards/?filter_year=2014&filter_program=6&filter_state=GA&filter_coc=

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City of Augusta		
Tenant-Based Rental Assistance	N/A	N/A
Subsidized Permanent Housing	N/A	N/A
Transitional/Short-term Facilities	29	\$ 210,180.00
Short-Term Rent, Mortgage & Utility Assistance	38	\$25,551.00
Permanent Housing Placement Services	3	\$4,150.00
TOTAL	70	\$ 239,881.00
City of Savannah		
Tenant-Based Rental Assistance	N/A	N/A
Subsidized Permanent Housing	24	\$72,522.85
Transitional/Short-term Facilities	N/A	N/A
Short-Term Rent, Mortgage & Utility Assistance	25	\$23,318.77
Permanent Housing Placement Services	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	49	\$95,841.62
State of Georgia		
Tenant-Based Rental Assistance	150	\$551,363.00
Subsidized Permanent Housing	98	\$235,512.00
Transitional/Short-term Facilities	112	\$125,790.00
Short-Term Rent, Mortgage & Utility Assistance	125	\$267,465.00
Permanent Housing Placement Services	59	\$33,122.00
TOTAL	544	\$1,213,252.00

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VA Supportive Housing Program (VASH)⁹

VASH is a joint project between the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The goal of the program is to transition veterans from homelessness to having permanent, secure, safe housing so that they may rebuild their lives. This program is administered with a housing voucher from HUD for veterans to rent a home or an apartment, and intensive case management services provided by the VA for five years.

From 2008 to 2015, 2,504 VASH vouchers have been awarded to PHAs in Georgia, including a total of 74 vouchers awarded to the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center/Athens Outpatient Clinic.

Other Federal Resources

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)¹⁰

The SSVF Program is a VA program that awards grants to private nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives that will provide supportive services to very low-income Veterans and their families residing in or transitioning to permanent housing. The grantees will provide a range of supportive services designed to promote housing stability.

In 2014, five organizations in Georgia received SSVF Awards totaling \$5.7 million. Action Ministries, Inc., which serves Athens/Clarke County, among others, received an award of just over \$1 million.

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery Program (SOAR)¹¹

Through its SOAR program, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) seeks to end homelessness through increased access to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) support. Nationally, 37 percent of all applications for SSI/SSDI are approved upon first application. However, for people who are homeless, initial SSI/SSDI application approval is only 15 percent. When homeless people apply for SSI/SSDI

⁹ http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/vash

¹⁰ Data from http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/ssvf/docs/2014_SSVF_Award_List.pdf

¹¹ <http://soarworks.prainc.com/states/georgia> and <https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/press-releases/2009-10-05/georgia-dbhdd-soar-project-tops-list-among-30-states>

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through the SOAR Initiative, initial application approval is greatly increased – 93 percent of persons thought to be eligible are approved within 3 months.

In Georgia, the SOAR program started in 2009 as a state-level effort, in which Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) trained nearly 250 agencies and 679 individual case managers across the state. Today, there are six local leads and 11 SOAR trainers in Georgia, including one SOAR trainer in Athens.

Georgia Resources

Funding - Special Initiatives - Coordination

This information is presented to make housing and health care providers aware of funding resources for affordable housing, as well as coordination currently taking place. The information is intended to facilitate strategy discussions about ways to close housing gaps, including by strengthening and expanding coordination among housing and service providers.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)¹²

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) promotes and implements community and economic development, local government assistance, and safe and affordable housing. Using state and federal resources, DCA helps communities spur private job creation, implement planning, develop downtowns, generate affordable housing solutions and promote volunteerism. DCA also helps qualified low- and moderate- income Georgians buy homes, rent housing, and prevent foreclosure and homelessness. Some of the statewide programs that DCA administers are listed below.

State Homeless Interagency Coordination Council (GIHCC)

Governor Perdue formed the GIHCC in 2004. Members of the council, which sits within DCA, represent widely diverse State agencies, entities and policymakers. This collaborative initiative is focused on ending chronic homelessness; policies that will eliminate discharging clients back into homeless situations; improving state agency coordination; improving access to SSI with a

¹² Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Homeless and Special Needs Housing; <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/SpecialNeeds/index.asp>

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consideration given to presumptive eligibility; evaluation of fiscal effectiveness; effective homeless prevention policies; and coordination strategies that will best achieve the Council's and the Governor's goals for ending chronic homelessness in Georgia.

GIHCC is also responsible for developing the state's Homeless Action Plan. In 2013, one of the main goals of the Homeless Action Plan was to **expand access to and use of the Federal mainstream housing and support service programs by homeless families and chronically homeless individuals, including Medicaid, TANF, SSI, CHIP, Workforce Investment Act, Food Stamps, Adult Literacy, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Veterans Benefits.**

Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program

DCA administers the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program in Georgia. LIHTC is one of the most important affordable housing programs available in Georgia for supportive housing development. The program provides competitive awards of federal tax credits to developers to assist in the creation of affordable rental housing including supportive housing. The program requires that 20 percent of LIHTC units be made available for households at or below 50 percent of area median income (AMI) or that 40 percent of LIHTC units be made available for households at or below 60 percent of AMI *[Note: AMI for the Athens-Clarke County Georgia metro area was \$38,227 in 2013].*

Since its inception, the LIHTC program has financed the development of almost 144,000 homes, supported 162,700 jobs, and generated \$15.51 billion in local income and \$6.11 billion in tax revenues in Georgia. In 2014, The Georgia DCA awarded \$22.4 million in LIHTC reservations to construct or rehabilitate 30 affordable rental housing properties throughout the state.

Georgia Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless (HTF)

DCA also administers the HTF, through which Georgia offers support to homeless assistance organizations, including local government and nonprofit organizations. Funding through the HTF supports a wide range of programs, including emergency shelter programs, rapid rehousing assistance, homelessness prevention, and permanent supportive housing. The HTF also funds services support to other projects, as well as technical assistance and research. In order to be eligible for funding, homeless assistance organizations must serve homeless or imminently

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homeless households. The Trust Fund typically combines state funding from the General Fund with local dollars. In 2015, the state contributed nearly \$2.2 million in funding to the HTF.

State Homeless Advisory Council

To facilitate a proactive dialog about preventing and eliminating homelessness and strategies to more effectively develop and implement CoC programs, the HTF regularly convenes meetings of the State Homeless Advisory Council. The council is composed of lead organizations from Continuums of Care, the homeless service provider community, local homeless coalitions, local governments, non-profit organizations, ecumenical community and many others interested in addressing issues of homelessness.

Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH)

The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing ("Initiative" or "GICH") offers communities a three-year program of collaboration and technical assistance related to housing and community development. The objective of the Initiative is to help communities create and launch a locally based plan to meet their housing needs.

Georgia Housing Search

GeorgiaHousingSearch.org is a website sponsored by DCA to provide detailed information about rental properties and helps people find housing to best fit their needs. The website includes a Special Needs housing feature to assist caseworkers in locating housing for traditionally hard-to-place clients, including homeless clients and people living with HIV/AIDS.

Northeast Georgia Homeless and Poverty Coalition¹³

In 1993, a group of Athens area homeless service providers met with the Georgia Coalition to End Homelessness to discuss ways in which to better coordinate services. Within a few months, this group was formally recognized as the Northeast Georgia Homeless Coalition. In 2013, the organization was renamed the Northeast Georgia Homeless and Poverty Coalition to better reflect the diverse group of membership agencies and the complex issues faced by Athens-Clarke County.

¹³ Northeast Georgia Homeless and Poverty Coalition: <http://northeastgeorgiahomelesscoalition.blogspot.com/>

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The mission of the Northeast Georgia Homeless and Poverty Coalition is to ensure collaborative planning, educational opportunities, technical assistance, resource development, and program advocacy for organizations working with individuals and families who experience homelessness and/or poverty.

Athens Land Trust¹⁴

Athens Land Trust (ALT) provides affordable housing for residents of Athens-Clarke. Its goal is to help people buy homes so that renting is not their only option. The monthly payments (including taxes and insurance) on ALT homes run between \$450 and \$675. As part of each sale, ALT provides the homebuyer with a 99-year renewable ground lease, which ensures that ALT houses will never turn into market-rate or above market-rate housing units. The ALT homeowner has full use of the land just like any other homeowner, and can even pass the home on to his or her children. If the homeowner decides to sell the house, ALT will buy the house back or find another low- to moderate-income family or individual to purchase the home.

Housing Programs- Homeless Assistance Resources

This information is presented to provide people working in the housing and homeless assistance systems with baseline knowledge of other housing programs in order to learn from other existing programs and better serve clients. Likewise, it is intended to inform health care providers of housing programs that may be able to serve their patients.

Re-Entry Partnership Housing (RPH) Program¹⁵

The goal of the RPH program is to provide short-term financial assistance to help stabilize an individual's reentry process, to enhance his or her ability to remain crime free. The purpose of the program is to develop a community based housing option for inmates who have been granted parole but have no valid residence plans. The program pays housing providers \$600 per month for a term generally not to exceed three (3) months, a total of \$1,800. In return the housing provider provides (directly or through written agreement with third parties) room and board without charge

¹⁴ Athens Land Trust: <http://www.athenslandtrust.org/affordable-housing>

¹⁵ Georgia Department of Community Affairs: <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/specialneeds/programs/rph.asp>

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to the parolee for this period. Considerations for mental health placement are made on a case-by-case basis, dependent upon the level of treatment.

This program involves a unique collaboration by multiple state agencies. First, funding for this program is made available to the State Board of Pardons and Paroles (lead agency) through a grant from the Federal Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and the Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. The Georgia Department of Corrections is also a critical lead partner. Finally, the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless (HTF) is the administrative agent for this program.

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Athens, Inc. (IHN Athens)¹⁶

IHN Athens is a coalition of Athens Area Churches and Congregations of Faith, referred to as Host Congregations or Support Congregations, which may provide shelter, meals, and support for homeless families in crisis for up to 90 days. Host Congregations, on a rotating basis, provide 3 meals a day to Network Families. Each network family is provided with its own room within the Host facility. The IHN Athens network of churches provides shelter, meals, and compassionate assistance for up to three families (or maximum of 14 people) in crisis situations. As a group, the families rotate from church to church on a weekly basis. By uniting congregations through the Day Center, and through the support of social service agencies, the program assists families with finding sustainable housing, job training, employment, and with meeting other various needs.

Advantage Behavioral Health Systems¹⁷

Through ongoing grant partnerships with the Georgia DCA and HUD, Advantage Behavioral Health Systems provides a vast array of housing and support services to those who are homeless. Supportive housing programs include scattered site subsidized housing programs targeting homeless and chronically homeless individuals and families. Residents receive support services such as mental health treatment, substance abuse counseling, intensive case management services, and comprehensive life skills training. Additional supportive services include rapid re-housing services, homeless prevention services, assistance with obtaining SSI/SSDI benefits, and targeted outreach services to the unsheltered homeless population.

¹⁶ IHN Athens: <http://www.ihnathens.org/>

¹⁷ Advantage Behavioral Health Systems: <http://advantagebhs.org/grants-and-initiatives.cms>, <http://advantagebhs.org/homeless-services.cms>

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Advantage also participates in the HUD program formerly known as Shelter Plus Care. HUD and DCA funding cover the shelter, Advantage provides the Care through Medicaid, Medicare, and State Contracted Services to individuals who are homeless and have mental illness. Advantage has supportive housing in Clarke and Walton Counties, and is working to expand into Barrow and Jackson Counties.

AIDS Athens, Inc.¹⁸

AIDS Athens, Inc. serves to address the needs of individuals infected and affected by HIV/AIDS through supportive services, and to prevent the spread of the disease through education and outreach. AIDS Athens recognizes that AIDS Housing is Healthcare, and therefore provides housing through two programs: a permanent supportive housing program for homeless persons with disabilities, and a HOPWA program. AIDS Athens also provides case management, social supportive services, a financial planning and employment program, educational workshop and days of support, a food pantry, and a clothing closet for persons with HIV/AIDS.

Athens Area Homeless Shelter (AAHS)¹⁹

AAHS provides collaborative, comprehensive services to homeless individuals and families and fosters public awareness of homelessness in the community. AAHS offers several services for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The **Almost Home** program is a transitional housing shelter for women with children. Participants of this program have access to holistic case management for up to 18 months while they work toward self-sufficiency. The **Going Home** program involves rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention by offering families experiencing or at risk of homelessness holistic case management as they become independent.

¹⁸ AIDS Athens: <http://aidsathens.org/get-support/client-services/>

¹⁹ Athens Area Homeless Shelter: <http://helpathenshomeless.org/home/programs>