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Concrete Support in Times of Need Resource List

Housing

The **Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)** www.dca.state.ga.us is the main government agency that addresses housing issues. State budget changes may impact availability of these services. You may want to check in with **Voices for Georgia's Children** to see if any relevant budget items or legislation has passed after each legislative session.

www.georgiavoices.org

The **Housing Choice Voucher Program**, also known as Section 8, is rental assistance for low-income individuals and families. The DCA has a link to check the status of waiting lists in your area. In order to keep this housing "decent, safe, and sanitary" there may be serious consequences for illegal activities that individuals should be aware of. Tenants are responsible for any activities in their homes even of guests.

Participants in the Voucher Program must maintain a high level of communication with DCA. For instance, participants are also required to notify DCA and the landlord if the head of household will not be in the unit for more than 14 days. They must be told in writing within 30 days about the birth, adoption or custody of a child. They must be notified of any household members are no longer in the home or if there are any changes to family composition or income. Adult occupants must be approved before taking up residence. Residence is considered established if someone is there more than 50% of the time or uses the mailing address in any way. Individuals not comfortable with these and many other requirements of this subsidized housing should keep that in mind before applying.

www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/RentalAssistance/programs/hcvc_program.asp

The **Georgia Dream Home Ownership Program** is primarily for first time home buyers, although those who have not owned a home in the past three years and in targeted areas (your chance of being in a targeted area increases the further south and west you are) also qualify. There are income and home price limits, but they are fairly inclusive. For current information on income requirements visit

<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/Homeownership/programs/downloads/GeorgiaDreamFirstMortgage.pdf>. The program offers multiple down payment assistance options. Like just about any assistance with home ownership, home buyer education is required.

<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/Homeownership/programs/GeorgiaDream.asp>

For the other end of the spectrum, you may be trying to help a family with basic shelter. DCA has a **Homeless Assistance Directory**. If can become familiar with options in your area before you need to refer someone. Cultivating a contact at the organization that seems most relevant to the population you serve would be ideal.

<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/SpecialNeeds/index.asp>

HomeSafe Georgia, previously titled the Georgia Hardest Hit Fund, is for homeowners who have experienced job loss or a substantial decrease in income. It is a lengthy process, but there are some shortcuts if you are already in foreclosure. It is also a process that can be done almost exclusively online or over the phone if transportation is an issue. <https://www.homesafegeorgia.com/>

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Transportation

The **Clean Air Campaign** www.cleanaircampaign.org website has a commute calculator to help individuals weigh their options. It also offers financial incentives for changing the way you get to work. It has information on employers who support alternatives like flex hours and carpooling, how to educate employers, and tax benefits. It does not just apply to the Metro Atlanta area. The Clean Air Campaign is now working with government agencies, employers, schools and residents in Athens-Clarke County, Central Savannah River Area (CSRA), Chattahoochee Valley, Northwest Georgia, and Middle Georgia. Commuters who carpool, vanpool, bike, or use transit and are unable to catch their normal ride home due to unexpected events (illness, unscheduled overtime, etc.) can receive a free Guaranteed Ride Home from The Clean Air Campaign or RideSmart.

<http://www.atlantaregional.com/transportation/commute-options>

Thanks to the proliferation of the internet, it is much easier to find the critical mass for **carpooling**. RideSmart and eRideShare.com are listed on the resource sheet in your handouts. It is still easier to do in larger cities, particularly near Atlanta, but if you can find a way to access lots of people in your area, your facility could help to create cooperative options for transportation. <https://www.erideshare.com/>

Zipcar is a car sharing service available in Atlanta and Columbus. You become a member and reserve a car when you need a vehicle paying by hour or day. You pick up the car from a reserved spot and return it there when you are done. www.zipcar.com

Food

Georgia's **Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program** is the fifth largest in the country. It provides nutrition, education, and supplemental foods to low income families. Women, infants, and children in families with income at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible. That would be at or below \$44,123.00 for a family of four. The benefits are for women who are pregnant, postpartum, or breastfeeding. Children under the age of 5 are also eligible. <http://wic.ga.gov/>

Child nutrition programs provide free and low-cost food to adult and child care organizations, shelters, "at risk" afterschool programs, preschool and schools. School lunch and breakfast in particular are working to improve the nutritional content. The income requirements vary. For current information and income requirements go to: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/CACFP/aboutcacfp.htm>

SNAP help to pay for the cost of food. The program also strives to help low-income households make healthier eating and lifestyle choices. It has a more complicated formula for eligibility than some of the other assistance programs in this list. There is an income requirement, 130% of the FPL, but your rent or mortgage, utilities, medical care, child care, and child support payments are considered in your eligibility. Also, any assets like bank accounts and your vehicle may disqualify you from benefits. <https://compass.ga.gov/selfservice/>

Food banks collect, inventory, and evaluate donated food. Then it is distributed through partner agencies. Partner organizations include: food pantries, youth programs, senior centers, community kitchens, day care centers, night shelters and rehabilitation centers. The Georgia Food Bank Association is part of the Feeding America national network of food banks. This

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resource is on your handout. It's a great way to find identify local food banks.

<http://georgiafoodbankassociation.org/>

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), “[t]he number of **farmers markets** has more than tripled in the past 15 years and there are now more than 6,100 around the country.” Local and regional markets help farmers get a higher return on their produce. The markets also provide some variety, particularly fresh produce, where the access may be limited. Many local farmers’ markets have the capacity to accept EBT food stamps, and some even have bonus incentives to attract those customers.

www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=KYF_MISSION

Childcare and Early Education

The **Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)** program subsidizes childcare costs for low income families. The program is for children up to the age of 13, but some special needs children may qualify up to age 18. Eligible families may choose where their child receives child care, including center or home-based care. <http://dfcs.dhs.georgia.gov/subsidized-child-care-assistance>

Quality Care for Children is a great resource for parents to find quality care by calling their help line, 877-ALL-GA-KIDS. Parents using informal child care, for whatever reason, should be given tools to be educated about what makes a safe and nurturing environment for his or her child. Qualitycareforchildren.org has a great Family, Friend, and Neighbor checklist. Check out their website for that and other great handouts for your parents.

<http://www.qualitycareforchildren.org/>

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (Bright from the Start) is the government entity that oversees licensing, professional standards, multi-agency collaborations, federal aid to programs, and technical assistance to organizations that provide for the early child care and early education need of children in Georgia. <http://dec.al.ga.gov/>

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a membership organization for professionals serving the needs of children birth through 8 years of age. NAEYC provides accreditation that ensures high quality care that supports optimal development and safety. <http://www.naeyc.org/>

The Georgia Association on Young Children (GAYC) is an important resource for those seeking NAEYC accreditation and other support for quality care. Their mission is to increase public awareness of the importance of early childhood education and to improve the quality of programs for young children through learning opportunities for early childhood educators. <http://www.gayconline.org/>

The UGA Cooperative Extension uses the latest research to help children and families thrive. We have resources to help improve the Quality of child care, develop healthy relationships, ensure healthy brain development, protect family members on the road, guide young children s development, and more.

<http://www.fcs.uga.edu/extension/family>

Healthcare

PeachCare for Kids™ Georgia's PeachCare for Kids meets the requirements under Title XXI of the Social Security Act, enacted by Congress in 1997. The intent is to provide affordable health care insurance for uninsured minors in Georgia. Georgia offers free PeachCare insurance to children under six in qualifying families. To be eligible for PeachCare, families must meet certain reimbursements, including income restrictions. These include:

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- * U.S. citizens, certain qualified legal residents and refugees who reside in GA.
- * Age 18 and under (eligible until 19th birthday).
- * Uninsured.
- * Family income less than or equal to 247% of the federal poverty level, \$49,656 for a family of three and \$59,904 for a family of four.

PeachCare covers everything a good insurance plan would cover including preventative services, primary care, dental, vision, drugs and mental health. You can apply for PeachCare for Kids™ online. They give a number, but it's clear that they prefer you use the website as much as possible. <https://www.peachcare.org/>

Planning for Healthy Babies (P4HB) is a program to address the growing issue of low birth weight and very low birth weight (VLBW) babies. This program is particularly interested in helping mothers make healthier choices including spacing births further apart. Participants receive primary care and family planning services. Between pregnancies, women who have given birth to low birth weight babies can get other services like substance abuse treatment, limited dental services, and prescription drugs for the treatment of chronic diseases. <http://dch.georgia.gov/planning-healthy-babies>

Medicaid is defined on the Department of Community Health website as simply “a medical assistance program that helps many people who can't afford medical care pay for some or all of their medical bills” (Accessed May 3, 2013). However, if your only qualification is low income, you must have very little income. For instance, someone living on unemployment would most likely be well over the limit. However, if you are a child, teenager, adult over 65, blind, disabled, or need nursing home care; Medicaid is an excellent option. It also can be a requirement for other programs to be in Medicaid. Pregnant women can even get same-day service when applying so that prenatal care for mother and baby can start right away. There are two notable exceptions. If you are coming off of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or if you have significant medical debt, you may qualify for assistance through Medicaid. <http://dfcs.dhs.georgia.gov/what-do-i-need-apply-medicaid>

The **Georgia Volunteer Health Care Program** supports free clinics and healthcare providers around the state. You can find a list of these clinics by city on the Georgia Department of Community Health website. One concern is that you are far more likely to find a free clinic in higher density, urban areas of the state, and there are only two in the southwest part of Georgia. <http://dph.georgia.gov/georgia-volunteer-health-care-program-gvhcp>

The **Rx Outreach Program** helps individuals get generic medications. This program is for all ages, uninsured, underinsured, and those having limited prescription drug coverage. The income limit is \$71,550 for a family of four. They ship your medications to you and charge a \$20-30 administrative fee. <http://www.rxoutreach.org/>

For people who aren't comfortable on the internet, a good healthcare referral and information resource is the **Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies PowerLine**. They are available during regular business hours, Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 7:00pm. They do have Spanish speaking staff and use a Language Line for other languages. They will give referrals but do not provide any direct services. www.hmhbga.org 1-800-300-9003, M-F, 8:00am – 7:00pm.

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Mother To Baby Georgia provides free, confidential, reliable information from experts in pregnancy risk assessment. **Mother To Baby Georgia** can answer questions about medications, drugs of abuse, alcohol, or illnesses and other exposures during pregnancy or while breastfeeding. Calls will be answered by an expert from the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, Emory University School of Medicine, Center for Maternal Substance Abuse and Child Development (MSACD).

Who should consider this service?

- Pregnant or breastfeeding women and their partners
- Women planning a pregnancy
- Health Care Providers: physicians, nurses, midwives, other health care professionals
- Adoption agencies
- Anyone interested in knowing more about Mother to Baby

Why call Mother To Baby?

- If you have questions about over-the-counter or prescription medications
- If you are sick and wonder if your illness might affect your baby
- If you had some alcohol to drink and are worried about how this might affect your baby
- If you are a prospective adoptive parent

Contact Information

Call Toll-FREE (855) 789-6222; Monday – Friday 9:00 am to 3:00pm

If your call is received after hours, it will be returned by the next business day.

Se habla Español por favor llame: (866) 626-6847

Email: mothertobaby@emory.edu

Visit Mother2Baby online at: www.MotherToBabyGA.org

Learn more at: emory.edu/msacd

Prevent Child Abuse Georgia's 1-800-CHILDREN Helpline is a statewide information and referral number for people who are concerned about the healthy development of children and the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Callers can talk to a trained individual who cares and wants to help. The helpline is staffed by bilingual professionals who link people with parenting support, counseling, referrals for legal needs, grandparent support, community assistance, and resources for special needs children. More information about other services offered by Prevent Child Abuse Georgia can be found at www.preventchildabusega.org, and the Helpline is 1-800-244-5373, M-F, 8:00am – 7:00pm.

Finance & Assets

The **Path2College 529 Plan** is offered by the state of Georgia and provides tax advantages to parents and others who set aside money for a child's future education expenses. These savings are tax-free, and participants have seven investment options to choose from.

<https://www.path2college529.com/>

Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are a special savings account for specific purposes. In some states, TANF funds are set aside to match these funds much like an employer might match retirement savings. Georgia is not one of those states. However, IDAs may be a useful way for a low-income family to put aside money. Since Georgia does not have a statewide IDA program, you can look up the closest local organization on the IDA network page. That website is in your handouts. http://cfed.org/programs/idas/ida_listserv/

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Financial literacy is defined as “the ability in making informed judgments and effective decisions on the use and management of money” (Gavigan 2010). Many financial literacy programs are geared toward children and college students, but adult classes might also benefit the community. Information about credit and credit scores would be particularly beneficial. More specific courses may be related to getting home buying assistance in the form of Home Buyer education.

Behavioral Health

The single point of access for the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and a source of excellent referrals is the **Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL)**. This is a good way to access mental health, substance abuse, crisis, and emergency services 24 hours a day. <https://bhlweb.com/tabform/Default.aspx> 1-800-715-4225

If you call the Georgia Crisis and Access Line and your situation is assessed as needing immediate face-to-face intervention, the intake personnel may choose to send a **Mobile Crisis Team**. They will arrive at the scene of the crisis within 1 ½ hours. The Team consists at a minimum of a licensed clinical social worker, a behavior specialist, and direct support staff. Depending on the situation, other professionals may be included.

The social worker will, with the team members' input, will make recommendations for interventions and referrals for additional support that should be made within 24 hours.

The Mobile Crisis Team coordinates intensive in-home and out-of-home supports provided on a time-limited basis, not to exceed 7 days. <http://dbhdd.georgia.gov/about-dbhdd>

The **Community Service Boards** are often significant resources around the state that cover all three areas under behavioral health. However, the actual services that they offer will vary from site to site. Their missions typically include giving support to individuals regardless of their ability to pay, but how that translates into exact cost may vary as well. <http://www.gacsb.org/>

It is important to remember that when it comes to services that the least restrictive option be found that helps keep everyone safe. However, in some cases, group homes or residential treatment may be needed. **Group Homes** under the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities include residential services for all our categories. There are facilities for adults and children over the age of 10. Children aged 5 to 9 are provided intensive in-home supports. Those with mental illness and addiction concerns may even be in the same group home. It may be difficult to know which treatment facility is best for an individual without consulting resources like the Georgia Crisis and Access Line. If you are working with family or friends of someone in treatment, let them know that visitation hours may be limited and to be aware of what is acceptable to bring to patients ahead of time. www.mygcal.com

Babies Can't Wait (BCW) serves children up until their third birthday regardless of family income. BCW is an early intervention program so families don't have to wait until children enter school to assess a child's health and developmental progress. We can identify developmental problems early and with a higher probability of lessening if not eliminating impact on that child's later life. As the name of the next resource on our list says, babies can't wait. Anyone can refer a child for

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an assessment, but a diagnosis of a specific mental or physical condition, including a developmental delay, is required for services beyond the assessment. The evaluation and service coordination to develop a plan are offered at no cost. The early intervention services are offered on a sliding scale. Federal mandates require that, as much as is possible and appropriate that these services be provided in the home and community settings. This helps to lessen barriers to access. <http://dph.georgia.gov/Babies-Cant-Wait>

Children 1st is a point of entry for public health and prevention services, including BCW. Children's 1st seeks to screen all births and children up to age 5 and provide assessment of all children and families that are identified as at risk for poor health or developmental outcomes. The Children 1st program is partnered with and links children to many organizations around the state.

<http://dph.georgia.gov/children-first>

Great Start Georgia (GSG) is the new name for the Georgia Early Childhood System of Care (ECSOC) that offers through the **GSC Information & Referral Center** outreach and referral, central intake (identification, screening, and data management), linkage to community services, and coordination of care among providers, particularly for families with higher needs. Families and service providers can access information about resources in their communities and at the GSG Resource Linkage Center staff will be available to support communities in screening and linking families to local supports and services. Connect to Great Start Georgia's free Information and Referral Center online by calling the toll free number at 1-855-707-8277. www.GreatStartGeorgia.org

Better Brains for Babies (BBB) is a collaboration of Georgia organizations that increase awareness about the science of early brain development, and educate adults about effective ways to support and promote healthy brain development. Learn more at: <http://www.bbbgeorgia.org>. Find suggested activities for parents to promote brain development at http://bbbgeorgia.org_parentsActivities.php

Other

Voices for Georgia's Children is a nonprofit child policy and advocacy organization that envisions a Georgia where children are safe, healthy, educated, employable, and connected to their family and community. It is our mission to be a powerful, unifying voice for a public agenda that ensures the well being of all of Georgia's children. <http://georgiavoices.org/>



Georgia Division of Family and
Children Services
Office of Prevention and Family Support

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