

# strengthening families

## G E O R G I A

[www.StrengtheningFamiliesGA.org](http://www.StrengtheningFamiliesGA.org)

### Concrete Support in Times of Need Resource List

#### Housing

**The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)** <https://www.dca.ga.gov/> 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](http://www.georgiavoices.org)

**The Housing Choice Voucher Program**, also known as Section 8, is a tenant-based assistance program that assists low income individuals and families in renting safe, decent and sanitary dwelling units in the private rental market. For more information on rental assistance, contact the Call Center at **1-888-858-6085**.

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.

<https://www.dca.ga.gov/safe-affordable-housing/rental-housing-%20assistance/rental-assistance-housing-choice-voucher/housing>

**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 <https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/incomelimitsfy20.pdf>

The program offers multiple down payment assistance options. Like just about any assistance with home ownership, home buyer education is required. <https://www.dca.ga.gov/safe-affordable-housing/homeownership/georgia-dream>

For the other end of the spectrum, you may be trying to help a family with basic shelter. DCA has a **Homeless and Special Needs Housing Assistance**. If you 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. <https://www.dca.ga.gov/safe-affordable-housing/homeless-special-needs-housing>

**HomeSafe Georgia** 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/>

**Georgia ACT: Advancing Communities Together** whose mission is to “build, support, and inform a statewide network of thriving organizations, professionals, and individuals advancing equitable housing and community development.” Individuals can opt to become members and will have training opportunities for advocacy. Guiding principles include a focus on “equal access to housing and communities of choice” and “development and preservation of affordable housing and healthy communities as well as financial inclusion for all families.” <https://georgiaact.org/>

**Georgia Legal Aid** provides information and services regarding tenants’ rights and other legal information for renters/homeowners. <https://www.georgialegalaid.org/>

### **Transportation**

**Georgia Commute Options**, <http://gacommuteoptions.com/> features 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.

The **Georgia Transit Association**, <https://www.gatransit.org>, is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving public transportation in the state of Georgia. Find a public transportation options in your area at [https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.gatransit.org/resource/resmgr/transitnearme\\_pdf.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.gatransit.org/resource/resmgr/transitnearme_pdf.pdf).

**Georgia Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation** provides eligible Medicaid members transportation needed to get to their medical appointments. To be eligible for these services, members must have no other means of transportation available and are only transported to those medical services covered under the Medicaid program. <https://medicaid.georgia.gov/non-emergency-medical-transportation>

### **Food**

**Georgia’s Women, Infants and Children (WIC)** program provides nutrition, education, and supplemental foods to low income families. Women, infants, and children in families with income at or below 185 % of the federal poverty level are eligible. 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 for children. The income requirements vary. For current information and income requirements go to: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp>

**SNAP** helps 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.

[www.gateway.ga.gov](http://www.gateway.ga.gov)

PLEASE NOTE: This website also provides a quick and easy way for people who live in Georgia to find out if they may also be able to get:

- Low or no-cost health care
- Help with buying prescription drugs
- Help with paying for child care
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

**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. It's a great way to find local food banks.

<http://georgiafoodbankassociation.org/>

### **Childcare and Early Education**

**The Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)** program assists no to low income families with the cost of child care. Currently, a partnership between the **Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)** and the Division of Human Services (DHS) ensures that CAPS eligibility determination and on-going case management are available in all 159 counties. Families may apply for subsidized child care at Georgia Gateway. [www.gateway.ga.gov](http://www.gateway.ga.gov)

**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. Quality Care for Children's website has a great Family, Friend, and Neighbor checklist. Check it out for that and other great resources for Georgia parents. <http://www.qualitycareforchildren.org/>

**Bright from the Start**, part of the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages Quality Rated, Georgia's community powered child care rating system.

The department also houses the **Head Start State Collaboration Office**, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. <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 for the Education of Young Children (GAEYC)** is an important resource for those seeking NAEYC accreditation and other support for quality care in Georgia. 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. <https://www.gaeyc.org/>

**The UGA Cooperative Extension** uses the latest research to help children and families thrive. They 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://extension.uga.edu/>

**The Georgia Early Education Alliance (GEEARS)** organization operating to inspire and provide leadership for a statewide movement on quality early learning and healthy development for all children ages birth through five. The GEEARS Readiness Radar is an online tool that allows users to explore data relevant to early childhood and school readiness in Georgia. [https://geears.org/research/readiness\\_radar/](https://geears.org/research/readiness_radar/)

## **Healthcare**

**PeachCare for Kids™** is a comprehensive health care program for uninsured children living in Georgia. The health benefits include primary, preventive, specialist, dental care and vision care. It also covers hospitalization, emergency room services, prescription medications and mental health care. [Georgia Families Care Management Organization \(CMO\)](#) is responsible for coordinating the child's care.

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. <https://dch.georgia.gov/peachcare-kids>. You can also call the main office at **404-656-4507**.

**Planning for Healthy Babies (P4HB):** Georgia ranks 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the number of low weight birth (LBW) births. LBW is defined as babies born weighing less 5 pounds, 8 ounces and VLBW is the category of babies born weighing less than 3 pounds, 5 ounces. The P4HB® program is one of the strategies included under the Department of Community Health's Improving Low Birth Weight Rate Initiative, which seeks to significantly reduce Georgia's LBW rate. The P4HB program fills a critical gap in health care for underinsured and uninsured Georgians by expanding Medicaid eligibility to women who qualify for family planning services. Women who give birth to a VLBW baby will have access to additional services including primary care and care management. <https://medicaid.georgia.gov/planning-healthy-babies>

**Medicaid** is a program that provides health care services to individuals who meet the requirements for income, resources, and citizenship. Cooperation with Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Child Support Services is a requirement of receiving certain types of Medicaid <https://medicaid.georgia.gov/how-apply>.

Individuals may apply for Medicaid at any local Division of Family and Children Services office, by mail or by telephone, **1-877-423-4746**. In order to prepare for the application process it is recommended that applicants review [Medicaid Fact Sheets](#) and [What do I need to apply for Medicaid?](#) You can also visit [Georgia Gateway](#) to see if you are potentially eligible for benefits.

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 Public Health website. For more information or to apply contact your regional representative: <https://dph.georgia.gov/georgia-responds/georgia-volunteer-health-care-program-gvhcp>

**Right from the Start Medical Assistance Group (RSM)** is a doorway for certain people in need of health care coverage. The mission of the RSM is to enable children under age 19, pregnant women, low income families and women with breast or cervical cancer to receive comprehensive health services through Medicaid and related programs. RSM eligibility specialists help these working and low-income families obtain access to no cost and low-cost health care coverage. <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/services/how-do-i-apply-medicaid/right-start-medical-assistance-group>

**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 \$103,000 for a family of four. They ship your medications to you and charge a \$20-30 administrative fee. <http://www.rxoutreach.org/>

**Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia (HMHB)** works to improve access to prenatal and preventive healthcare for women, children and families in Georgia through direct service, collaborative advocacy and community education. HMHB operates the Maternal and Child Health Referral Line for the Department of Public Health to provide callers with appropriate referrals and resources across the State. They are available Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm. 1-800-300-9003, [www.hmhbga.org](http://www.hmhbga.org)

**MotherToBaby Georgia** is dedicated to providing FREE evidence-based information to mothers, healthcare professionals, and the general public about medications, alcohol, drugs of abuse, herbal supplements, chemicals, infectious diseases, and other exposures during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. MotherToBaby Georgia is located at the Emory School of Medicine and is part of the Center for Maternal Substance Abuse and Child Development (MSACD). In addition to MotherToBaby Georgia MSACD includes prevention activities, research projects, and the Emory Neurodevelopmental and Exposure Clinic (ENEC), a clinic for children who have been exposed to alcohol or other substances prenatally. <https://mothertobaby.org/affiliates/mothertobaby-georgia/>

#### **Contact Information**

Phone: 866-626-6847; Se habla Español. Text: 855-999-3525

You can also chat live with an expert by visiting MotherToBaby Georgia online at:

<https://affiliates.mothertobaby.org/georgia/>

**PCA Georgia's 1-800-CHILDREN Helpline (1-800- 244-5373)**, M-F, 8:00 am– 6:00 pm is a statewide information and referral number for parents or professionals looking to be connected to supportive programs in their area. 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. The Helpline has an online Resource Map that can be used as a community resources guide for families served by your organization. [www.PCAGeorgiaHelpline.org](http://www.PCAGeorgiaHelpline.org).

## **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 several investment options to choose from. <https://www.path2college529.com/>

**United Way** offers an online guide, "Help Paying Bills" which includes tips and resources to search for immediate help or put together a budget for the next couple months. <https://www.unitedway.org/my-smart-money/immediate-needs/i-cant-cover-my-expenses/get-help-paying-your-bills#>

**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. The UGA Extension program offers a variety of financial classes, podcasts, and resource materials to help individuals and families plan for their financial futures. Topics include saving and investing, planning for retirement, living on less, managing cash flow and more. <http://extension.uga.edu/topic-areas/money-family-home/money.html>

**The Earned Income Tax Credit**, EITC or EIC, is a benefit for working people with low to moderate income. To qualify, you must meet certain requirements and file a tax return, even if you do not owe any tax or are not required to file. EITC reduces the amount of tax you owe and may give you a refund. To qualify for EITC you must have earned income from working for someone or from running or owning a business or farm and meet basic rules. And, you must either meet additional rules for workers without a qualifying child or have a child that meets all the qualifying child rules for you.

<https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/earned-income-tax-credit/who-qualifies-for-the-earned-income-tax-credit-eitc>

Use the [EITC Assistant](#) to see if you qualify. The EITC Assistant helps you find out your filing status, if your child is a qualifying child, if you are eligible and estimate the amount of the EITC you may get.

**Match Savings/Individual Development Accounts (IDA)** help current and former foster youth, ages 14-21, to make successful transition to adulthood. Youth completes initial financial literacy training and makes initial deposit to establish the IDA at a banking institution within the community. Over time, the youth makes deposits into the account. The funds will be matched by the public-private partnership with MAAC through issuance of a check to a vendor for specific purchase of an asset or to achieve a goal. <https://www.garyse-ilp.org/programs/match-savingsida>

## **Behavioral Health**

The single point of access for the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) and a source of excellent referrals is the **Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL)**. GCAL, <https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/access-services>, **1-800-715-4225**, is the 24/7 hotline for accessing mental health services in Georgia. DBHDD provides treatment and support services to people with mental illnesses and addictive diseases, and support to people with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities. For more information, go to the [Georgia DBHDD website](#).

**Mobile Crisis Services** is a 24/7 mobile response for immediate on-site crisis management through assessment, de-escalation, consultation and referral with post crisis follow up to assure linkage with recommended services. These services may be accessed by calling the toll-free Georgia Crisis & Access Line at **1-800-715-4225**.

**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. For information on a CSB in your area visit <https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/locations/community-service-board>.

The **NAMI Georgia Helpline** is a NON-CRISIS helpline (770-408-0625) available Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm that gives out information on resources for people with mental illnesses or family members with mental illnesses. <https://namiga.org/resources/nami-georgia-helpline/>

**Babies Can't Wait (BCW)** serves children up until their third birthday regardless of family income. Developmental problems can be identified early and with a higher probability of lessening if not eliminating impact on that child's later life. 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.

Anyone can refer a child for 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 population-based system in the State of Georgia, designed to serve as an entry point into all public health services for children, birth – 5 years old. Children 1st facilitates early identification of at-risk children and links them with early interventions services, as well as other public health services and community based resources. Children 1st screens children and families who may be at-risk for poor developmental outcomes and need additional support to thrive. All referrals are made in an effort to help the child grow up healthy and provide the family with the necessary tools to be successful. The Children 1st program is partnered with and links children to many organizations around the state. <https://dph.georgia.gov/children1st>

**Free Your Feels** is a campaign to increase mental health awareness and encourage youth in Georgia to “explore real feelings and share them fearlessly.” Their website features resources for immediate support and other informational resources. <https://www.freeyourfeels.org/>

**CDC's *Learn the Signs. Act Early.*** helps parents track their child's milestones from age 2 months to 5 years with easy-to-use illustrated checklists; tips from CDC for encouraging a child's development; and information on what to do if you are ever concerned about how your child is developing. Parents can also download the CDC's free Milestone Tracker app which helps parents track milestones and get tips and activities on their mobile device. [www.cdc.gov/actearly/](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly/)

**The Georgia Home Visiting Program**, <https://gahomevisiting.org>, is a statewide effort, sponsored by the Georgia Department of Public Health and supported by communities, to ensure that every child in Georgia gets a "great start" in life. The Georgia Home Visiting Program is designed to create a community culture of care, encouragement, and support for all families before and after the birth of a child. Across hundreds of Georgia communities, services are available to ensure that these important early years are rich with opportunities for children to be educated, safe, and healthy. A free Information & Referral Center offers connections to relevant local resources and information. This can be accessed by visiting their website or by calling their toll free number at **1-855-707-8277**.

**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/>.

## **Other**

**Family Connection Partnerships** is the only statewide network in the country dedicated to the health and well-being of families and communities. They empower communities to craft local solutions based on local decisions. They connect partners to the resources they need and help coordinate and manage efforts. This disciplined approach to collaboration allows them to extend much-needed locally based support and to make effective use of existing resources and services. Family Connection Partnerships are located in each Georgia County <http://gafcp.org/>

**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/>



This project was supported in part by the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Community Based Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CFDA 93.590). Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Community Based Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CFDA 93.590).

