



**NATIONAL SURVEY
OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES**

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from the INSTITUTE FOR CHILDREN, POVERTY, AND HOMELESSNESS

Georgia had an estimated 1,812 homeless families on a single night in 2010, with providers serving nearly three times their bed capacity over the course of the year.¹ This brief summarizes some of the state's public and private initiatives to assist these families.

State Taskforce on Homelessness

Taskforce: The Georgia Interagency Homeless Coordination Council (formed by executive order in February 2004) implements the state's plan to end homelessness.

Governor's Appointee: Commissioner Mike Beatty of the Department of Community Affairs has chaired the Georgia Interagency Homeless Coordination Council since 2004.



Demographic Summary and Overview of Regional Organization

	Georgia	Fulton County ²	Cobb County	Chatham County
Persons in homeless families ³	5,459	1,238	204	171
Number of family shelter beds ⁴	4,262	1,607	245	252
Persons in homeless families (per 10,000 population in families) ⁵	15	20	7	20
Percent of families in poverty ⁶	16.02%	16.95%	8.68%	18.38%
10-Year plan date approved or implemented	2002	2003	No plan	2005
10-Year plan target population	All	All	No plan	Chronic
Point-in-time count frequency	Biennially	Biennially	Biennially	Annually
Point-in-time count managing agency	Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Metro Atlanta Tri-Jurisdictional Collaborative on Homelessness	Cobb Community Collaborative Policy Council on Homelessness	Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) managing agency	Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Main organizing agency or Continuum of Care (CoC) lead applicant	Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Fulton County Human Services Department	Cobb Community Collaborative Policy Council on Homelessness	Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless

Georgia's HPRP on My Mind

As part of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the state of Georgia was awarded \$19,084,426 in Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP) funds. As of April 1, 2011, three-quarters (75.2%) of the monies had been expended, with homeless households provided an average of \$3,740 in cash assistance and at-risk clients receiving an average of \$2,278.⁷ Of the 3,284 households that had participated in Georgia's HPRP by September 30, 2010, over two-thirds (68.9%) were families with children. Three-quarters (74.9%) of all 2,776 adults who exited HPRP had the same income at exit, including over two-thirds (69.8%) of the 1,329 persons who entered the program with no income. Households with and without children resembled each other in residence at entry and exit; 74.3% of parents and 75.9% of other adults entered HPRP from their own rental housing without ongoing subsidies and 91.5% of members of families with children and 92.9% of persons from adult-only households exited to their own rental housing without ongoing subsidies.⁸



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The *National Survey of Programs and Services for Homeless Families* is an online resource for service providers, advocates, researchers, and public policy makers working in the field of family homelessness. The Web site provides a state-by-state snapshot of the interconnections between governmental and nonprofit work to end family homelessness. For additional information on Georgia and other states, visit www.icprwb.org

Barriers Faced by Homeless Rural Georgians

According to an assessment comparing 2009 point-in-time count estimates of homeless persons with the number of shelter beds, over 89% of homeless family members and individuals could not be accommodated in 60% of Georgia's 159 counties. Although half (52%) of all counties statewide are rural, they account for 72% of those with greatest unmet need.⁹ Many rural counties have few dedicated homelessness organizations. To access mainstream benefits, job training, and other government services, clients in rural areas travel longer distances than those in urban regions and use more limited personal and public transportation. Parents' difficulties are exacerbated by scarcity of public child care sites and high costs of private day care. Local poverty organizations, such as those that disburse utility assistance, do not prioritize persons at-risk of homelessness.

Georgia's homelessness service providers have found prevention to be one of the most effective strategies in addressing rural family homelessness. Emergency Shelter Grant recipients are restricted to use no more than 30% of monies for prevention. As of June 2011, new federal funding guidelines are pending that would give providers greater flexibility in allotting grant dollars. Furthermore, existing providers are receiving more of their funding from federal and state sources specifically for persons who were formerly institutionalized or would otherwise be institutionalized, limiting their ability to serve families.¹⁰

Addressing Homelessness in Atlanta

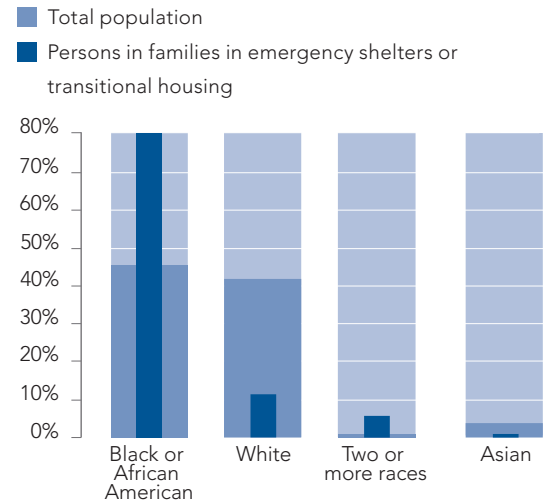
In response to recommendations in the City of Atlanta's 2003 plan to address homelessness, the overall stock of family beds expanded by 40.3% (from 1,701 to 2,387) between 2005 and 2010. However, the distribution of family beds shifted. The number of emergency shelter beds decreased 37.6% (from 510 to 318), while that of permanent supportive housing beds multiplied tenfold (from 72 to 780).¹¹ The majority of permanent supportive housing initiatives were financed through the Homeless Opportunity Fund, a one-time, \$22 million revenue bond established by the Atlanta Development Authority in 2005 and paid using a rental car tax. The fund contributed to the development of 670 permanent supportive housing units and the 24/7 Gateway Center. The center, a comprehensive drop-in facility for unsheltered families and individuals, is one of the largest non-profit providers of homelessness services in the state and was recognized in 2008 as a best-practices model by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness.¹²

Specialized Education for Homeless Children and Their Parents

Established as a non-profit organization in the Atlanta metropolitan area in 1988, Our House provides year-round early childhood education to homeless children aged six weeks to five years old. Heads of households can attend group counseling meetings, parent council meetings, or parenting education and life skills workshops at Our House. Homeless adults in the community may also register for 120 classroom hours and 480 hours of hands-on training on-site in preparation for a national child care professional credential assessment. During fiscal year 2010, 97% of 157 students achieved developmentally appropriate milestones despite the developmental delays they experienced at program entry. Of the 68 children aged zero to three years old who began receiving child care services in the first half of fiscal year 2011, 56 (82%) presented with one or more deficiencies in the physical (22 children), social or emotional (27), cognitive (21), and language skills (20) developmental domains at intake. Our House is the first child care center specifically for homeless children to receive accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.¹³

Racial Composition of Homeless Families and the Total Population in Fulton and DeKalb Counties

(by shelter type)



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, AHAR Exchange Public Reports: 2009 Comprehensive Report of Sheltered Homeless Persons; U.S. Census Bureau, 2005–09 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Endnotes

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2010 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Homeless Populations and Subpopulations; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, AHAR Exchange Public Reports: 2009 Comprehensive Report of Sheltered Homeless Persons.
- Statistics for Fulton County include DeKalb County.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2010 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2010 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Housing Inventory Chart Report.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2010 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations; U.S. Census Bureau, 2005–2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.
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- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HPRP Quarterly Performance Report Q7, 2011.
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- Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Georgia's 21,000: 2009 Report on Homelessness; Georgia Department of Revenue, "Listing of Rural Counties for the Purposes of the Rural Physician Credit," <https://etax.dor.ga.gov>
- John Bassett, Shonteria Charleston, and Aisha D. Williams, "Rural Homelessness Roundtable" (conference presentation, 2010 Homelessness Program Managers Training Conference, Washington, DC, March 16, 2010); John Bassett (Director, Georgia Department of Community Affairs and State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless), interview with ICPH, April 2011.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2005 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Housing Inventory Chart Report; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2010 Housing Inventory Chart Report.
- U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, Innovation #18: Put on Your Traveling Shoes: Make a Pilgrimage to See "What's Working," May 2008; Dawn J. Luke, "City Finding Innovative Ways to Aid Homeless, but It Needs Help," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 28, 2008.
- Tyese Lawyer (Executive Director, Our House), interview with ICPH, April 2011; Our House, <http://www.ourhousega.org>