



## STATE OF GEORGIA FY 2013 HOMELESS ACTION PLAN

*Homeless persons have increased their independence and been restored to the mainstream of society because State and local resources have ensured optimal opportunities through the creation of an integrated and seamless system of quality services. As a result of these actions, the State of Georgia will have the resources to prevent homelessness, to transition homeless families back to self sufficiency and to end chronic homelessness within ten years.*

*To accomplish this vision and in line with the goals and objectives of "Opening Doors: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (OD), the State of Georgia Interagency Homeless Coordination Council (GIHCC) offers the following goals and accompanying activities as a Plan of Action.*

### **Goal One**

**Expand access to and use of the Federal mainstream housing and support service programs by homeless families and chronically homeless individuals. HUD-identified mainstream service programs include Medicaid, TANF, SSI, CHIP, Workforce Investment Act, Food Stamps, Adult Literacy, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Veterans Benefits. Mainstream housing programs include the affordable and supported rental and homeownership programs administered by HUD, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), and local agencies.**

#### **Outcome:**

Appropriate referral and enrollment procedures will result in individuals and families receiving or maximizing their opportunity to receive the mainstream housing and/or support services, and in particular, employment and health services to which they are entitled or can benefit.

#### **Action Steps**

1. Continue to enhance the COMPASS system at DHS to grow transactions through community partners, and to incorporate a Document Imaging System (DIS) for preservation and sharing of client documents.
2. Identify increased access to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits for adults with disabilities experiencing homelessness by establishing and tracking annual measures on the disability determination period and the initial approval rate.
3. Implement SSI review 90-days prior to discharge of state inmates.
4. Create ongoing opportunities for Agency staff and local service providers to share information.



5. Engage regional and local representatives of state agencies and hold regional meetings to connect state agency staff with local providers and decrease misunderstandings about eligibility criteria for mainstream programs.
6. Implement HEARTH-style street outreach programs state-wide.
7. Enhance GeorgiaHousingSearch.org to include more comprehensive information on properties with project-based rental assistance.
8. Conduct user forums to identify areas to improve access to and functionality of GeorgiaHousingSearch.org.
9. Implement outcome based objectives for DCA programs in order to increase meaningful and sustainable employment for people experiencing or most at risk of homelessness.

## **Goal Two**

**Provide supported housing for chronically homeless individuals and families that is both affordable and appropriate for the delivery of supported services. End chronic homelessness in five years.**

### **Outcome:**

There will be an increase in supported housing units added annually with a preference for units designed to integrate primary and behavioral health care services for our most vulnerable homeless, including those who are chronically homeless.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Increase the quantity of permanent supportive housing (PSH) available in Georgia.
2. Fully utilize existing sources of funding for PSH including Medicaid, 811, ACT, etc.
3. Increase access for chronically homeless persons, including those within the Department of Justice (DoJ) settlement class, to existing permanent supported housing units.
4. Implement regional forums to bring together regional representatives, community providers, housing providers, behavioral health, and hospital staff.
5. Increase the number of PSH providers/operators that are listed on GeorgiaHousingSearch.org and the COMPASS system operated by the Department of Human Services (DHS).
6. Increase the number of PSH providers/operators using HMIS.



### **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 supported service needs of the individual.**

#### **Outcome:**

Adoption of discharge policies by agency heads. Expand and Replicate Successful Programs for Individuals Discharged from Institutions.

#### **Action Steps:**

1. Continue to examine the ability of current State policies to assure appropriate housing and community treatment for individuals with disabilities discharged from institutional settings.
2. Obtain feedback from local providers and State Agencies on successes and challenges related to individuals being discharged from Institutions.

### **Goal Four**

**Develop replicable community planning model(s) to enhance local implementation of integrated housing and service delivery strategies for homeless persons.**

#### **Outcome:**

Homeless funders, providers, and partners at all levels will adopt guiding principles surrounding performance and outcome data to guide best practices for housing and service interventions.

#### **Action Steps:**

1. Develop a collaborative and coordinated intake and assessment system for the Balance of State Continuum of Care. Collaborate with other Continuums as reasonable and practicable.
2. Increase evaluation capacity of Continuums, local agencies, and planning groups. Develop a model outline of outcome based measurements for program evaluation for use at the local and regional levels based on best practices in the area of outcomes measurement and program evaluation around plans to end homelessness.
3. Offer training and technical assistance to providers based on local and national best practices.
4. Explore the possibility of pilot projects integrating Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) data with data from certain State Agencies in order to assess prevalence of homelessness and impact of homeless services. Explore available data (including HMIS) on the number of homeless individuals discharged from various institutions prior to homelessness.



## **Goal Five**

**Engage 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.**

### **Outcome:**

Present the 2013 Georgia Homeless Action Plan and Accomplishments to the Office of the Governor, state agency officials, and others.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Evaluate current agency participation with the Interagency Homeless Coordination Council and recruit additional agencies.
2. Conduct a continuous overview of Council partners and their relationships, Council goals and strategies.

## **Goal Six**

**Identify and implement strategies to decrease the number of homeless families with children and unaccompanied youth in Georgia.**

### **Outcome:**

Decrease the number of unaccompanied youth and homeless families with children in Georgia. Rely on numbers reported to HUD by the seven continuums of care, and as well as statistics provided by the Department of Education.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Develop working relationships relationship between other working groups and agencies targeting the issue of family and youth homelessness.
2. Encourage Continuum of Care representatives to integrate strategies for counting Unaccompanied Youth during Point in Time Counts.
3. Provide support for the Fulton, DeKalb, City of Atlanta collaborative seeking the resources to end homelessness among unaccompanied youth.