



# ***Our Mission and Our Vision***

*The mission of the Georgia Department of  
Human Resources is to assist Georgians  
in achieving healthy, independent  
and self-sufficient lives.*

*The Georgia Department of Human Resources  
will be one team focused on accountability,  
effectiveness, efficiency, and sensitivity.*



**DHR** carries out its mission by means of:

- over 100 health, mental health, employment and financial assistance, social services, regulatory and rehabilitation programs in 1,000 locations;
- 20,000 state employees and workers in every county — including nurses, hospital aides, rehabilitation counselors, caseworkers, nutritionists, child support agents, day care center surveyors, and sanitarians;
- state and federal funds and fees;
- partnerships with local coalitions, religious and civic groups, private and public organizations;
- long-range planning.

The department's goals embrace many of today's most pressing health and social issues. Department priorities include:

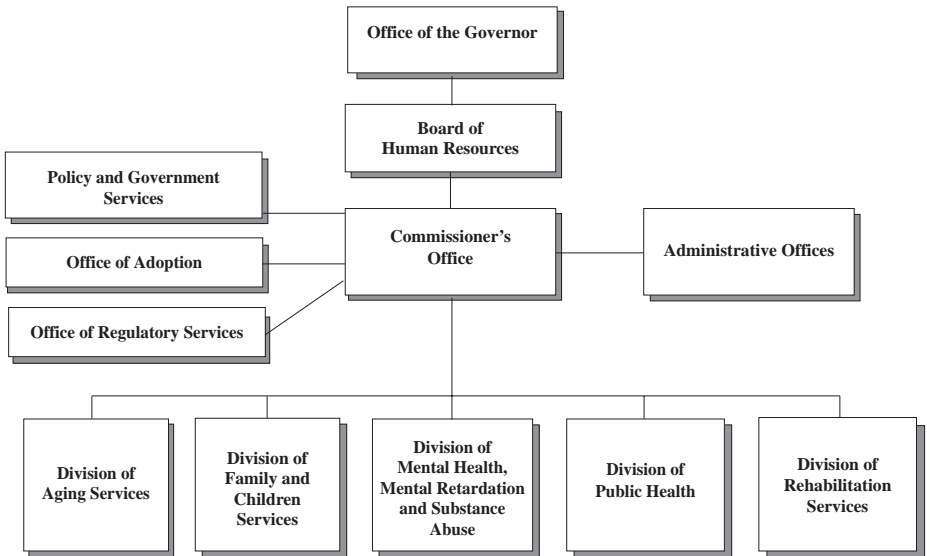
- **health promotion** to prevent disease and disability;
- helping Georgians overcome barriers to self-sufficiency through **workforce investment**;
- preventing and treating **substance abuse**;
- assuring that **long-term care** is available for people with disabilities and frail elderly people who need help with daily living; and

- improving **child health and welfare**, including **teenage pregnancy prevention**.

The department strives to educate the public about DHR services, and to make **information** about these issues and **referrals** to helping services available to every citizen of Georgia. **Advanced information technology** is key to achieving these goals efficiently, and will be utilized wherever possible.

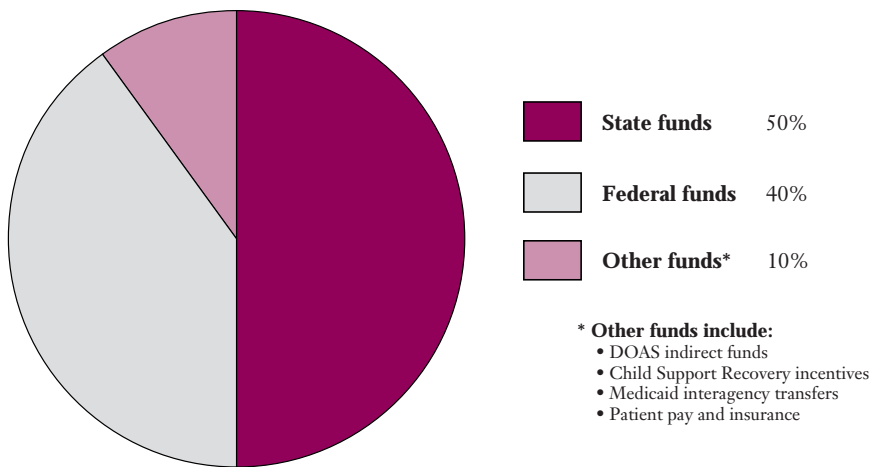
DHR was created by the Georgia legislature in 1972 to form a coordinated network of helping agencies close to home. A 15-member Board of Human Resources is appointed by the Governor to set policy. The DHR commissioner is appointed by and accountable to the board.

## Georgia Department of Human Resources

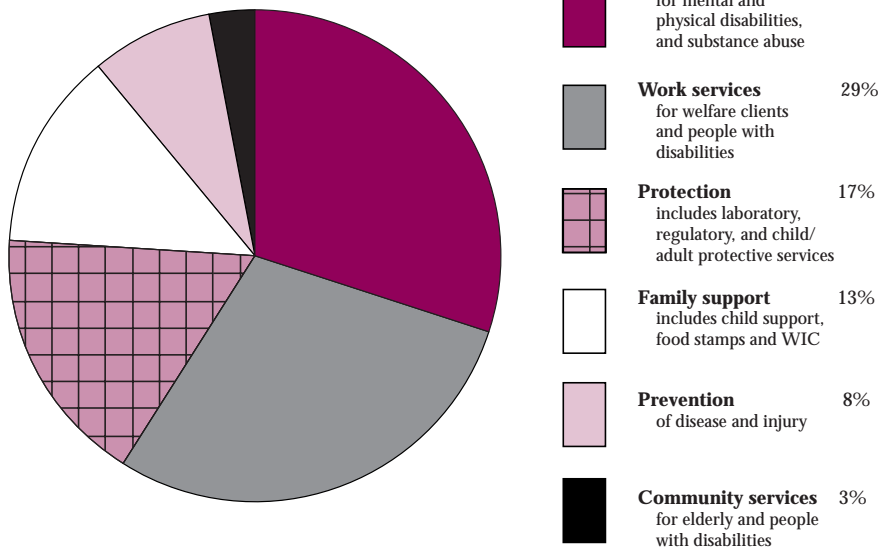


*December 1999*

# DHR's budget comes from ...



# and goes to...



DHR receives about 10 percent of the state’s budget.



# Aging Services

**D**HR's Division of Aging Services administers a statewide system of home and community services for older Georgians. Most of these services are provided by regional subcontractors, the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), with state and federal funds and technical assistance provided by the Division of Aging Services. The **health and social services** emphasize prevention, early intervention, and enabling people to remain in their homes and communities. All AAAs offer **information and assistance**.

## AT HOME

- Part-time **homemakers**, some **health care**, **home-delivered meals** and **respite care** are available in most parts of the state.
- Frail or disabled older people who are eligible for Medicaid can qualify for the **Community Care Services Program** to prevent them from entering nursing homes prematurely. Services include in-home health care, personal support, respite care, emergency response systems, and alternative living arrangements.
- The **Alzheimer's Disease** and Related Disorders Program provides support to caregivers and patients both at home and in the community.

## IN THE COMMUNITY

- **Meals and social activities** are available at centers throughout the state, and a limited number of adult day care services provide personal care and other activities.

- **Transportation** services bring people to and from services outside their homes.
- People 55 and older with low incomes can get help finding employment through the **Senior Community Service Employment Program**.
- **Adult Day Health**, including nursing and dietary services, social work, personal care, and occupational, speech and physical therapy, is available through the Community Care Services Program.

## ELDER RIGHTS AND ADVOCACY

- **Long-Term Care Ombudsmen** (consumer representatives) in each AAA advocate for residents of nursing homes and personal care homes to resolve complaints.
- The **Elderly Legal Assistance Hotline** helps older Georgians resolve legal dilemmas. The hotline numbers are 1-888-257-9519 (statewide) and 404-657-9915 (Atlanta). Each AAA also administers a local Elderly Legal Assistance Program.
- The **Health Insurance Counseling, Assistance, and Referral for the Elderly (HICARE)** Program uses volunteers to assist people with concerns about health and long-term care insurance, including Medicare, Medicaid, and Medicare supplemental insurance (Medigap).
- **Elder abuse prevention** activities in each AAA promote public education about elder abuse and exploitation (see DFCS).

# *Family & Children Services*

County departments of Family and Children Services (DFCS) administer social services programs, support services for employment and financial assistance to families with problems caused by poverty, neglect or lack of education. Most of these services are funded through federal programs and grants in aid from the state. DFCS gives Community Service Block Grant funds to local Community Action Agencies to help **homeless and poor families**. National welfare legislation and state reform initiatives have dramatically altered county DFCS operations.

## **SOCIAL SERVICES**

- **Child Protective Services** investigates child abuse and neglect reports and works closely with families, linking them to services such as drug treatment and parenting training.
- **Foster care** provides temporary homes for children whose families cannot care for them.
- **First Placement, Best Placement** emphasizes thorough assessments of children entering DFCS custody. If any special needs or problems are recognized, the child can be placed in a setting that is most appropriate for meeting those needs.
- **Adoption** caseworkers gather biographical information on children available for adoption, conduct family assessments, and teach prospective parents about adoption.
- Caseworkers also provide **protective services for adults** who cannot care for themselves and are abused or neglected.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** provides cash benefits for poor children and their caregivers. Grants which include adults are limited to four years.
- Employment is the primary goal for TANF recipients and applicants. Services such as child care, transportation and job training are provided to help families become self-sufficient.
- **Food stamp** benefits help eligible low-income households buy basic foods.
- The **subsidized day care** program pays for child care for low-income families.

## CHILD SUPPORT

- **Child Support Enforcement (CSE)** collects child support from non-custodial parents. Services include finding a parent, getting a court order to require the parent to pay, establishing paternity, collecting the support, enforcing payments and assisting low-income fathers with job training.
- CSE's **Fatherhood Program** helps low-income men obtain job training and support services so they can find and keep jobs.
- The **Family Support Registry** centralizes the collection and processing of payments made by income deductions. Employers can now send all child support payments to one central address.

## OTHER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

- County DFCS offices determine **Medicaid eligibility** for people who are disabled, blind or over age 65. They also enroll low-income children and pregnant women in the **Right from the Start Medicaid** program.
- **Energy assistance** pays for some home heating and cooling costs for low-income eligible families, particularly in emergencies, through the Community Action Agencies.
- The **refugee resettlement** program provides social services, cash and medical assistance to refugees for eight months after they arrive in the United States.





# *Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse*

**G**eorgia's MHMRSA **regional boards** are the contact points for people needing treatment for mental illness or substance abuse problems, support services for people with mental retardation, or substance abuse prevention services. They are responsible for planning, purchasing, and coordinating all publically supported hospital and community services and for evaluating and monitoring contracted community services. Services are provided across the state through seven state hospitals, one mental retardation institution, and contracts with 27 community MHMRSA **service boards**, boards of health and various private providers. In addition to providing treatment, support and prevention services, contracted community programs screen people for admission to state hospitals and give follow-up care when they are discharged.

## **MENTAL ILLNESS**

- People with serious persistent mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia and manic depressive illness, are diagnosed and treated in both **community programs and hospitals**. All service areas have these basic services aimed at helping people with mental illness live in the community:
  1. **Outpatient services** include evaluation and diagnosis; individual, family, group and activity therapy; medication; and nursing care.

2. **Day programs** — including day treatment, day support and peer support — teach work-related skills and daily living skills such as personal hygiene.
  3. **Group homes** and other residences offer different levels of supervision and care for people who cannot live at home or with their families.
  4. **Crisis services** provide short-term medical help and stabilization during a psychiatric crisis.
  5. **Service coordinators** link people to the services they need and coordinate their care.
  6. Regions are beginning to add “**cutting edge**” services, such as mobile crisis teams, assertive community treatment, and new, more effective medications.
- A person with mental illness may be admitted to a **state hospital** voluntarily until stabilized. He may be admitted involuntarily when he is considered a danger to himself or others; he may be released when stabilized and no longer considered dangerous.
  - **State hospitals** are in Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, Milledgeville, Rome, Savannah, and Thomasville.
  - **Forensic patients** — individuals charged with a crime — are sent to state hospitals by court order for evaluation before trial and for treatment if found incompetent to stand trial or not guilty by reason of insanity.

## EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED CHILDREN

- All community service areas now have a network of services to serve youngsters close to home:
  1. **Outpatient services** include diagnosis, evaluation, counseling for the child and family and medication when needed.
  2. **In-home crisis services** work with the family and the child in the home during a serious crisis.
  3. **Day treatment programs** after school and on weekends help youngsters improve behavior and study skills.
  4. **Therapeutic foster care and group homes** give children and teens a safe place to live and get treatment if they cannot live with their families.

5. **Respite care** gives families and foster families a temporary rest from the strain of caring for a child with severe emotional disturbances.
- **Outdoor therapeutic** programs in Warm Springs and Cleveland help troubled children in a wilderness camp-like setting.
- **Short-term inpatient treatment** is available at state hospitals in Atlanta, Savannah, Milledgeville and Thomasville.
- The **Multi-Agency Team for Children (MATCH)**, managed by the Division of Family and Children Services, funds intensive residential treatment for a limited number of severely disturbed children and teens.

## MENTAL RETARDATION

- **Family and personal support** provides training and in-home assistance to help people with mental retardation live with their families or on their own.
- **Day programs** help people develop social and work skills.
- **Respite services** offer temporary care during an emergency or when the family needs a break.
- **Residential programs** provide supervised living arrangements for people with mental retardation.
- **Supported employment** helps people with mental retardation find and keep regular jobs.
- In special cases, people may be admitted to mental retardation institutions during a crisis. Georgia has one mental retardation institution — **Gracewood State School and Hospital** in Augusta. State psychiatric hospitals in Atlanta, Milledgeville, Rome and Thomasville also have mental retardation units. State hospitals in Augusta, Columbus and Savannah will open mental retardation units in 2000.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- **Group counseling** and other outpatient services are available in most counties.
- **Detoxification** enables people to withdraw safely from the physical effects of alcohol and other drugs.
- **Short-term intensive residential treatment** programs available in some areas help people begin to live a drug-free lifestyle.
- **Half-way houses** and other residences help people who need more recovery time.
- **DUI risk reduction** programs evaluate and educate people convicted for drunk driving, drunk boating, or possession of illegal drugs. Multiple offenders are now required to enter treatment if the evaluation shows they have an alcohol or other drug problem.
- **Methadone** programs in urban areas treat people addicted to heroin and certain other narcotics.
- Special treatment programs for **pregnant women** are available in all areas of the state. They are given priority in any state addiction program.
- Special **“ready for work”** programs provide treatment for women on welfare who are unable to find jobs because of drug or alcohol problems.
- School **student assistance** programs identify and refer students with alcohol and drug problems.
- **Adolescent substance abuse** services available in some areas include counseling, after school and weekend treatment, family education and treatment, and residential treatment for teens with the most severe problems.
- **Prevention** programs are available in most communities.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact your MHMRSA regional board to find out what services are available in your area. The regional board is listed under Department of Human Resources in the state government pages of the phone book.
- Contact MHMRSA Public Information at 404-657-2270 for general information and for referral to the regional board that includes your county.



# *Public Health*

**C**ounty health departments are responsible for protecting public health and safety and preventing or reducing disease and disability. County health departments receive grants in aid and technical and administrative assistance from the state Division of Public Health. Local boards of health identify health issues and plan health care for their counties. Low fees are charged for most services, based on income; no one is turned away for inability to pay.

## **DISEASE MONITORING**

- Epidemiologists investigate **disease outbreaks and trends** and track unhealthy behavior and over 40 diseases.

## **HEALTH INFORMATION**

- **Birth and death certificates** are available from the vital records custodian at some county health departments or at the probate court, and from the Vital Records office in Atlanta. The state Public Health office also compiles statistics on pregnancies, births, deaths, abortions, marriages and divorces.

## **FAMILY AND CHILD HEALTH**

- In Georgia just under half of the children receive their **immunizations** from county health departments. The departments give **prenatal care**, with special services for high-risk and low-income women.
- Other services include **teen pregnancy prevention, family planning** and **sexually transmitted diseases** diagnosis and treatment.

- Children receive **dental, scoliosis, hearing and vision screenings** and can receive **dental sealant**, in addition to health examinations for Medicaid-eligible children (Health Check).
- The **WIC** (Women, Infants, and Children) program screens for nutritional risk and gives food to low-income pregnant women, new mothers and their children.
- **Early intervention** (Babies Can't Wait) evaluates children up to age 3 who have developmental delays, trains and counsels parents, and arranges special therapies and other services the child or family may need.
- The **Office of Maternal and Child Health** conducts research on the health needs of women and children to help local programs improve services.
- Medical care and surgery for low-income **children with chronic or disabling conditions** are provided through Children's Medical Services clinics and partnerships with private doctors.

## SCREENING AND ASSISTANCE FOR SPECIFIC HEALTH PROBLEMS

- Health departments are the main centers for **HIV/AIDS** testing (both anonymous and confidential), counseling and prevention education.
- **Tuberculosis** testing and treatment are available at all county health departments.
- County health departments also offer screening for **hypertension** and **sickle cell**; referrals for **breast** and **cervical cancer screening**; and **diabetes management**.

## REGULATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- The Emergency Medical Services Section licenses **ambulance services** and certifies **emergency medical technicians**.
- A statewide system of **hospital trauma centers** is regulated by the state Office of Trauma.
- Sanitarians at county health departments issue permits to

**restaurants**, inspect **septic tanks**, **schools**, **jails** and other public facilities, and in some counties test animals for **rabies**.

- Injury control programs offer consultation on **home safety**, provide **occupational health and safety** consultation to local government offices, and provide **child safety car seats** to parents.
- The Georgia Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program studies **lead poisoning** in Georgia, tests children's blood lead levels and informs the public about prevention and treatment.

## LABORATORIES

- The state laboratory and two regional laboratories **test blood** and other samples to screen newborns and diagnose and control a variety of diseases.



# *Regulatory Services*

**H**ospitals, nursing homes and day care centers are inspected and licensed by DHR's Office of Regulatory Services. In addition to regular reviews for compliance with health and safety standards set by state law or regulation, the office investigates complaints from citizens and consumers. The office also certifies hospitals and some other health care facilities for Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement.

## **CHILD CARE**

- **Day care centers** (19 or more children) as well as group day care homes (7 to 18 children) and residences for troubled youth are inspected and licensed annually.
- **Adoption agencies** are inspected and licensed.
- The office registers **family day care homes** (3 to 6 children) and inspects informal family day care homes where relatives provide subsidized care for children whose mothers are moving from welfare to work.

## **HEALTH CARE**

- **Nursing homes** are inspected, licensed and certified.
- **Hospitals** are inspected, licensed and certified.
- **Home health agencies, clinical laboratories, drug treatment centers** and their facilities are inspected, licensed and certified.
- The office registers and inspects **X-ray machines**.
- The office inspects and licenses **personal care homes**.





# *Rehabilitation Services*

**T**he Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) provides opportunities for work and personal independence for people with disabilities. DRS work programs both generate and conserve tax dollars, and provide employers with qualified employees. Services include: job analysis; accessibility surveys; work and job readiness; work adjustment; job coaching; and supported employment. Services are provided at little or no cost to the client. The federal Rehabilitation Act requires DRS to give priority to those with the most severe disabilities. Regional DRS offices are located in the following cities: Atlanta, Rome, Gainesville, Newnan, Columbus, Athens, Augusta, Macon, Dublin, Albany, Valdosta and Savannah. These regional offices serve all Georgia counties through 54 smaller offices called hubs.

## **COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT**

- Rehabilitation counselors help Georgians with disabilities find **employment**. Counselors also arrange **vocational, psychological and medical evaluations**.
- Rehabilitation counselors make referrals to community rehabilitation facilities for a wide range of services such as work preparation, job clubs, mobility training, low vision evaluations and other services that lead to employment.
- Georgia Industries for the Blind provides **training and employment** in manufacturing and packaging.

- The **Business Enterprise Program** provides people who are legally blind with self-employment opportunities in vending facilities, snack bars and food service sites.

## INDEPENDENT LIVING

- **Independent living** programs teach people with disabilities to become more self-sufficient. These services are provided through a contract with the Statewide Independent Living Council.

## ASSISTIVE WORK TECHNOLOGY

- Assistive work technology ensures that people with disabilities are independent and employable. Rehabilitation engineers assess, prescribe, build or modify **work-related equipment** to help DRS customers succeed in the workplace.

## ROOSEVELT WARM SPRINGS INSTITUTE FOR REHABILITATION

- The institute provides residential and outpatient **medical and vocational rehabilitation, education and research**.

## DISABILITY ADJUDICATION

- Disability adjudication staff determine eligibility for **Social Security** (SSI and SSDI) benefits and screen all claims for possible referral to other services.

## SPECIALIZED SERVICES

- **Tools for Life** (800-497-8665) consults with employers and advocates for assistive technology and adaptive devices and services for Georgians with disabilities.
- Employers seeking job-ready **qualified applicants** as well as services such as job analysis, ADA explanation, and accessibility surveys should call 404-657-3000 to find the nearest office.
- **Education and consultation** are provided to businesses and other organizations concerning disability awareness, disability-related law, advocacy, training, and technical assistance.



# *Other Offices*

**T**he **Commissioner's Office** oversees the operations of the Department of Human Resources.

- The **Office of Policy and Government Services** reviews legislation and keeps elected officials apprised of DHR issues. This office also responds to constituent concerns.

The **Office of Communications** produces materials to educate the public about DHR services and health and social issues. It is also the contact point for media inquiries.

The **Legal Services** office handles requests for administrative hearings and final appeals from clients of DHR and conducts public hearings on rules and regulations. This office also reviews legislation and provides legal consultation to DHR managers.

- The **Office of Adoption** arranges for the adoption of children who are in the permanent custody of DHR, by identifying and eliminating barriers to adoption and increasing privatization. Local DFCS offices supervise the care of children available for adoption and prepare families interested in adopting.

- The **Office of Audits** conducts audits of county DFCS offices and of internal DHR operations. It also manages the audits and performance evaluations of MHMRSA community service boards and reviews all audits required of contractors.
- The **Office of Financial Services** is DHR's central accounting office, issuing purchase orders and payroll, vendor and child support checks. The office also prepares all federal financial reports and human services contracts, and provides DHR management with financial information.
- The **Office of Fraud and Abuse** investigates suspected fraud in the food stamp and other public assistance programs. It also investigates suspected employee misconduct and misuse of funds.
- The **Office of Human Resources Management** plans, manages and implements personnel services for all DHR divisions and offices.
- The **Office of Human Resources and Organizational Development** improves the organizational skills and performance of DHR staff through training, education and consulting.
- The **Office of Planning and Budget Services** manages current funds and develops and manages budgets and budget proposals as well as policy for the department. It also helps develop DHR's goals, objectives and strategies.
- The **Office of Technology and Support** manages information technology for all DHR's divisions and offices, as well as telecommunications, transportation, department-owned land and facilities, leased office space, engineering, records, insurance and risk, mail service and forms distribution, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

# *Who to ask, where to get answers*

**H**ere is a list of many of the services provided by DHR, the office responsible and the page number if covered in this handbook. In most cases, local offices are the best sources for information about service availability and eligibility. Questions about legislation and constituent concerns are handled by the Office of Policy and Government Services, 404-651-6316. Fact sheets and issue papers are available from the Office of Communications, 404-656-4937, or on the Internet at <http://www.dhr.state.ga.us>.

## **KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS**

AAA = Area Agency on Aging

DFCS = County Department of Family and Children Services

MHMRSA = Division of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse

\*Asterisk denotes programs not operated by DHR.

- Adult protective services — DFCS, 6
- AIDS — County health department, 13
- AIDS hotline — 1-800-551-2728
- Adoption — Office of Adoption, 18; DFCS, 6  
1-888-460-2467
- Adoption Agencies — Office of Regulatory Services  
(licensing), 15
- Aging — Aging Services, AAA, 4
- Aging, Council on — 404-657-5344
- Alcoholism — Community service board, 8, 10
- Alzheimer's Disease — AAA, 4
- Ambulance licensing — Public Health state office, 13
- Birth and death certificates — County health department, 12
- Cancer — County health department, 13
- Child abuse and neglect — DFCS, 6
- Child care for low-income (subsidized) — DFCS, 7
- Child care licensing — Office of Regulatory Services, 15

- Child health — 12
- Child safety — County health department, 14
- Child support — DFCS, 7
- Children, emotionally disturbed — regional MHMRSA boards, DFCS, 9
- Children's Medical Services — County health department, 13
- Community care for elderly — AAA, 4
- Developmental Disabilities, Governor's Council on — 404-657-2126
- Domestic violence hotline — 1-800-338-6745
- Disabilities (adults) — Rehabilitation Services, 16
- Disabilities (children) — Children's Medical Services and early intervention, 13
- Drug abuse — Community service board, 10
- Drug abuse hotline — 1-800-338-6745
- Early intervention — County health department, 13
- Early Intervention, Interagency Coordinating Council for — 404-657-2728
- Elderly — See Aging, Nursing homes, Community care, 4
- Emergency Medical Technician certification — Public Health state office, 13
- Employment for disabled — Rehabilitation Services, 16
- Energy assistance — Community Action Agencies, 7
- Family planning — County health department, 12
- Food stamps — DFCS, 7
- Foster care — DFCS, 6 — 1-888-310-8260
- Fraud — DHR Office of Fraud and Abuse, 19
- Fraud and Abuse hotline — 1-800-282-4063
- Gambling hotline — 1-800-699-7117
- Healthcare — Regulatory Services (licensing), 15 — 1-800-878-6442 (complaints)
- Health Insurance counseling (HICARE) — Aging Services, 5 — 1-800-699-8387
- Homeless — DFCS, 6
- Housing\* — U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Immunization — County health department, 12
- Infant mortality — Public Health state office, 12; see prenatal care and WIC

- Infectious disease — Public Health state office, 12
- Juvenile delinquency\* — Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
- Lead Poisoning — County health department, 14 —  
1-800-424-LEAD
- Legislation — Office of Policy and Government Services, 18
- Maternal and child health — County health department, 13
- Maternal and Infant Health, Council on — 404-657-2864
- Medicaid eligibility — DFCS, 7
- Medicaid (other questions)\* — Department of Community  
Health
- Medicare insurance\* — 1-800-772-1213
- Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse,  
Governor's Advisory Council on — 404-657-2270
- Mental illness — Community service board, 8
- Mental retardation — Community service board, 10
- Nursing homes — Regulatory Services, 15 —  
1-800-878-6442 (complaints)
- Occupational health and safety — County health department, 14
- Personal care homes — Office of Regulatory Services, 15
- Poverty — DFCS and Community Action Agencies, 6
- Prenatal care — County health department, 12
- Public health statistics — ([www.ph.dhr.state.ga.us](http://www.ph.dhr.state.ga.us))
- Rehabilitation, Client Assistance Program — 1-800-822-9727
- Rent, utilities — Community Action Agencies, 6, 7
- Senior Legal Hotline — 1-888-257-9519 (statewide);  
404-657-9915 (Atlanta)
- Social Security/SSI (Supplemental Security Income) eligibility  
— Rehabilitation Services, 17
- Substance abuse prevention — MHMRSA, 10
- TANF — DFCS, 7
- Teen pregnancy — Public Health state office, 12
- Troubled children — Community service board, 9
- Tuberculosis — County health department, 13
- Vocational rehabilitation, 16-17
- Warm Springs — Rehabilitation services, 17
- Welfare — DFCS, 7
- Welfare fraud — DHR Office of Fraud and Abuse, 19 —  
1-800-282-4063
- Welfare reform — DFCS, 7
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children) — County health dept., 13
- WIC Hotline — 1-800-228-9173
- Women's health — County health department, 12-13