



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

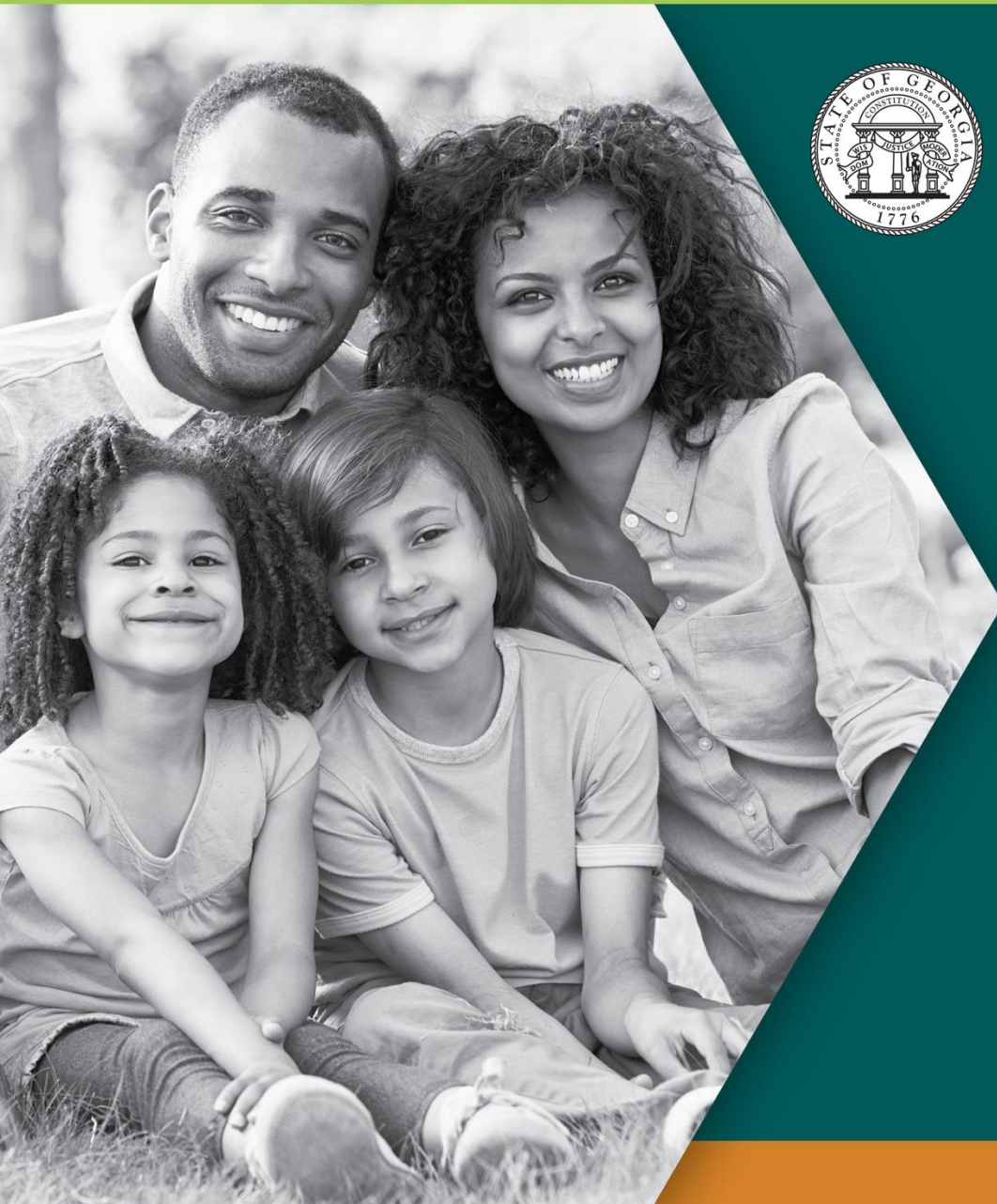
DHS Board Meeting Q1

January 7, 2026



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Welcome & Attendance



Georgia Department of Human Services

Office of Family Independence Updates

John Hallman

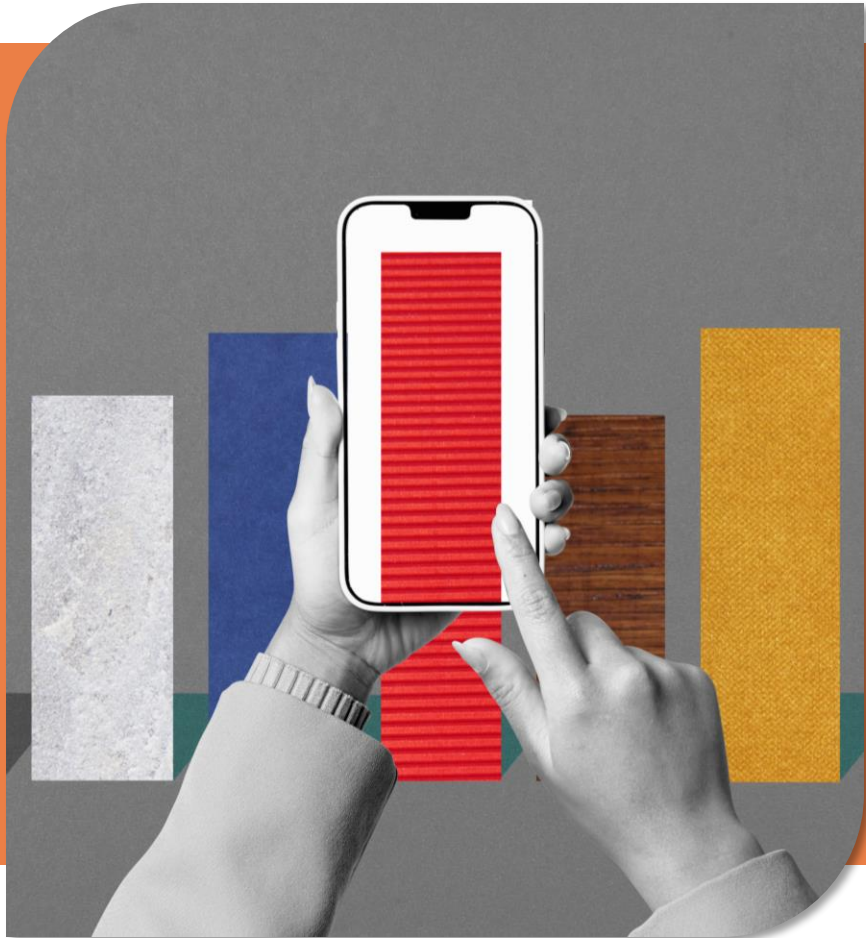
Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Family Independence

OFI Updates

- On Demand Pilot
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Application Portal
- State Medical Eligibility Unit (SMEU) Disability Determinations

A screenshot of the 'EAP APPLICATION' web portal. The header is dark blue with the text 'EAP APPLICATION' and a 'Sign In' button. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'FAQ', and 'Locations'. The main content area has a blue heading that says 'Welcome to State of Georgia Energy Assistance Program'. On the left, there is a 'New User?' section with the text: 'Before creating a profile, go to the Home tab and complete Prescreening Questions.' On the right, there is a sign-in form with fields for 'Email' and 'Password', both with red error messages indicating they are required. There is a 'Sign In' button and a 'Forgot Password?' link below the form.

What is On Demand?



- Our On Demand waiver has been **approved by FNS.**
- Instead of scheduling for a specific date/time, customers call 877-423-4746 for an interview.
- **No more rescheduling interviews!**



Planned Pilot Phases

Pilot Phase	Work Included	Timing (Tentative)
1	Expedited Intakes (SNAP only and SNAP + Family Medicaid)	Beginning January 2026
2	Unexpedited Intakes (SNAP only and SNAP + Family Medicaid)	Beginning early March 2026
3	Renewals subset (exact subset of renewals TBD)	TBD

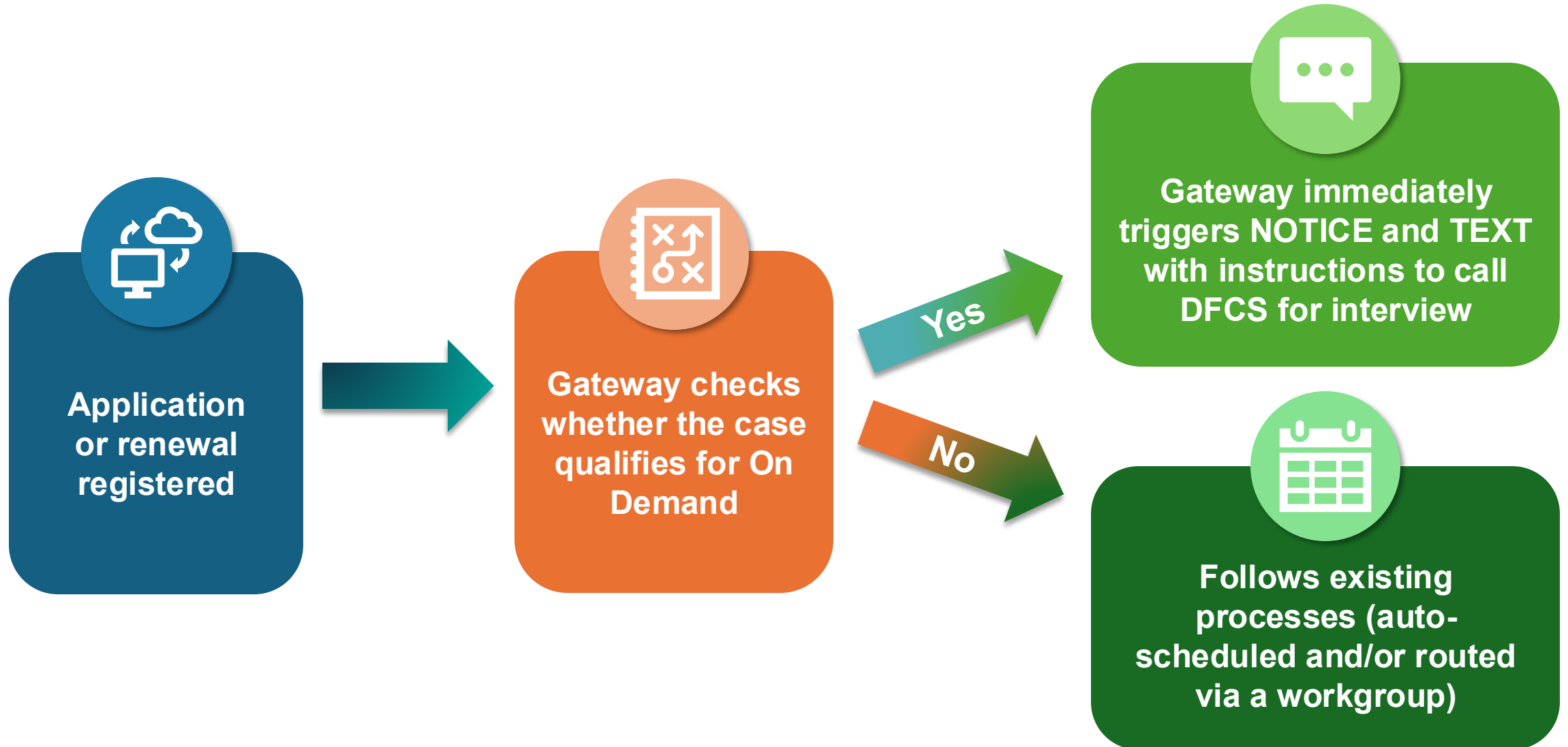


On Demand Pilot Phase 1

- **Pilot target start date:** Week of January 26
- **Work included in pilot:** Expedite SNAP-only applications and Expedite SNAP/Family Medicaid combo applications (includes FM Pathways)
 - Hierarchy in Gateway
 - Programs not included in On Demand will continue to have a scheduled appointment
- **Pilot Staff:** Portion of Special Operations Unit
 - >300 eligibility specialists
 - ~50 supervisors
 - A portion of this group is “contingency” – they will be trained for On Demand but may remain in their normal roles during the pilot



Gateway Identifies Case



P28 Identifies Client in Need of Interview



On Demand Interview Opportunities

1

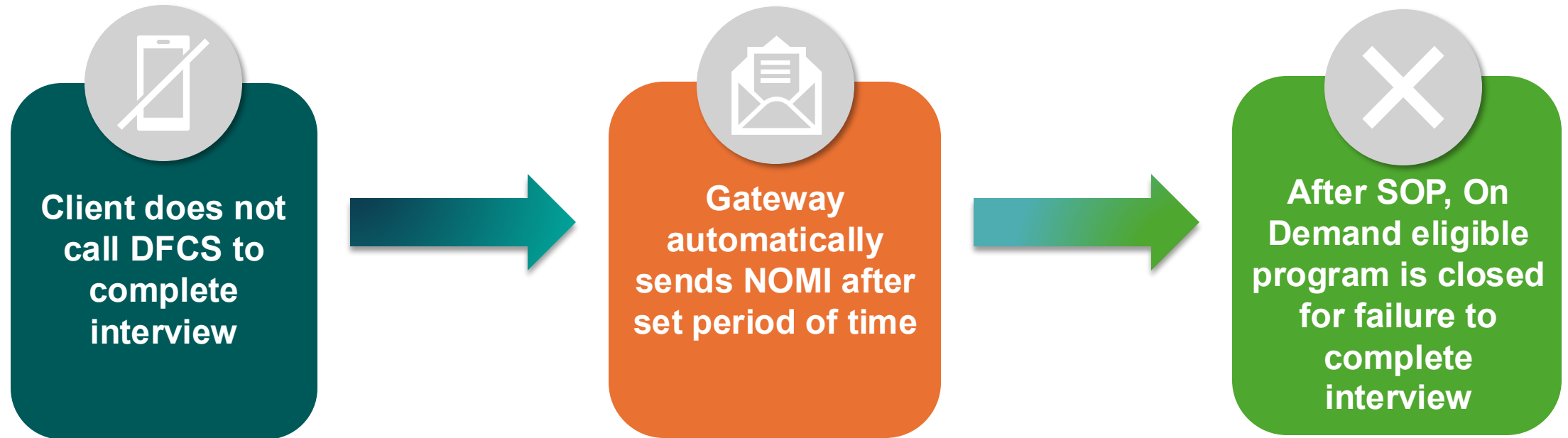
**Client calls
for an
interview
877-423-4746**

2

**First contact
call reaches
client**



Notice Of Missed Interview (NOMI) Process



LIHEAP Online Portal

Old Process

- Paper-based application process
- Manual data entry into the state EAP system = error prone
- State staff had to travel to Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to audit paper applications



LIHEAP Online Portal

- **New Process with Portal**

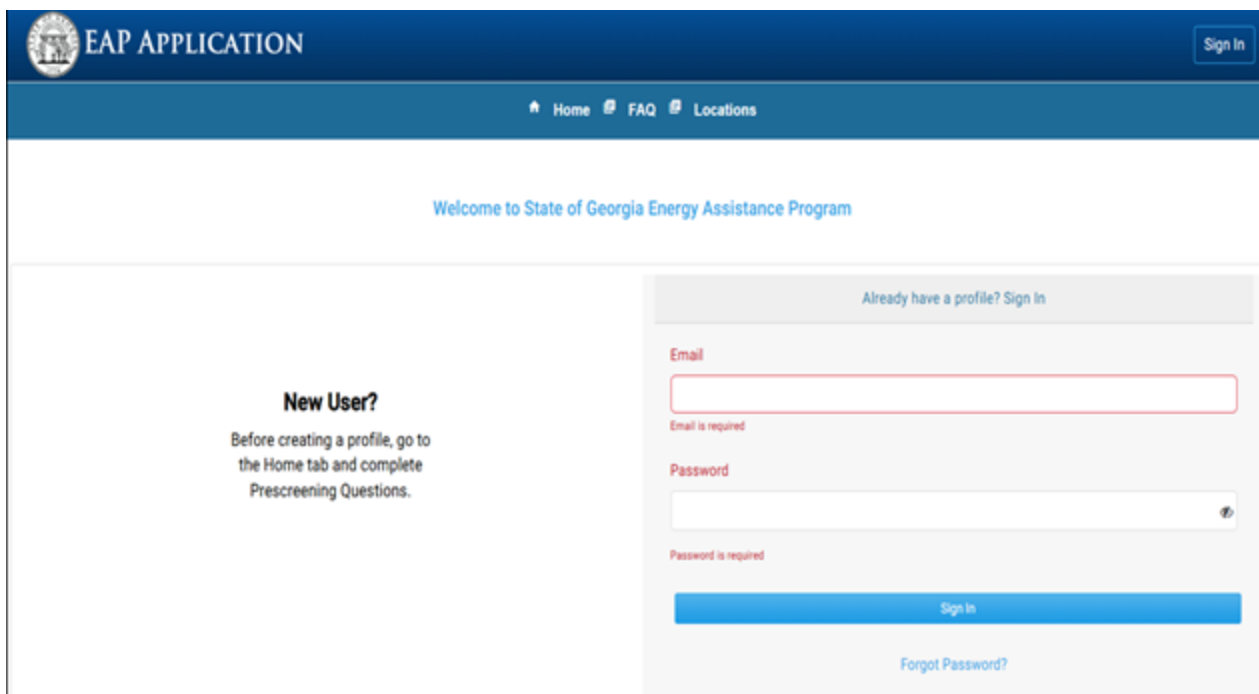
- CAAs capture client information directly into online application portal
 - Collected over 110,000 applications in FFY2025
- Information captured in applications is transferred to the state EAP system
 - No more manual data entry for required state reporting
- Flags emergency applications for CAAs and the state to allow tracking of SOP
- State staff can audit portions of applications remotely leading to faster, more effective onsite audits
- Worked with the CAAs to develop
- Continually refining with CAAs
 - Allows them to provide feedback for adjustments and suggest future enhancements
 - Monthly meetings and feedback collection through SharePoint



LIHEAP Online Portal

Future Enhancements

- Offline portal to capture data when internet is not available
 - Data will be stored and uploaded when internet becomes available
 - Enables electronic data collection at events
- Public-facing application portal



The screenshot shows the LIHEAP Online Portal login page. At the top, there is a blue header with the text "EAP APPLICATION" and a "Sign In" button. Below the header, there are navigation links for "Home", "FAQ", and "Locations". The main content area features a "Welcome to State of Georgia Energy Assistance Program" message. On the left, there is a "New User?" section with instructions: "Before creating a profile, go to the Home tab and complete Prescreening Questions." On the right, there is a login form with fields for "Email" and "Password", both marked as required. A "Sign In" button is located below the password field, and a "Forgot Password?" link is at the bottom right of the form.



SMEU Disability Decision

Challenge

- Some Medicaid Classes of Assistance (COA) require a doctor's review to determine if an individual is disabled
- Goal: complete pending SMEU reviews within 90 days of receipt
- Policy change shifted the responsibility for large portion of disability determinations from the federal government to the state
- The state contracted directly with two doctors to complete determinations who struggled to handle the new, increased volume



SMEU Disability Decision

Solution

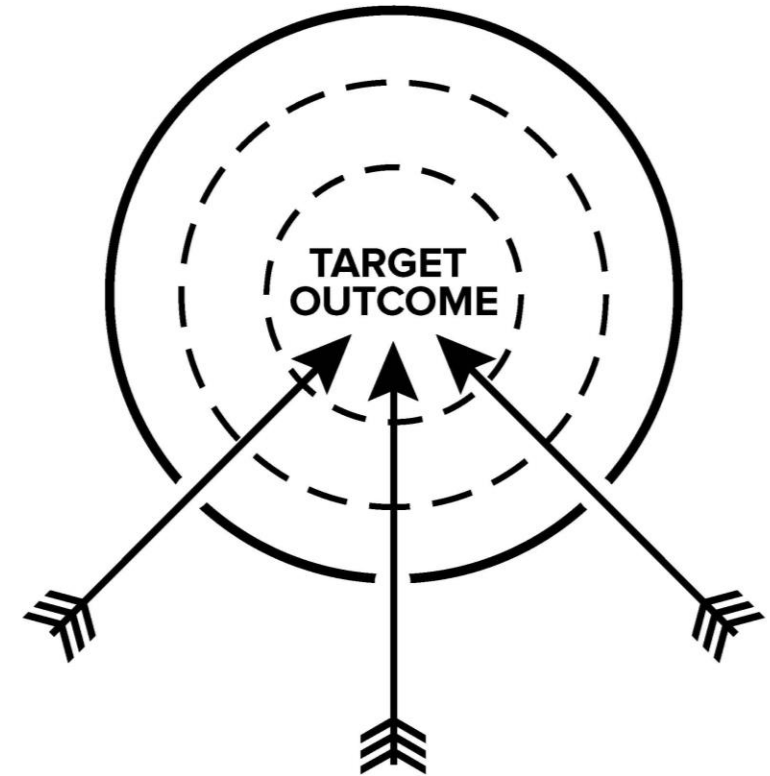
- Medical Services Advisors Platform
 - Contracted with two medical service providers to provide doctors to complete disability determinations
 - Created a system to send cases for review to contractors
 - Established secure portal that allows for secure review of medical documents
 - Draw from a nationwide talent pool of doctors to provide much higher capacity



SMEU Disability Decision

Outcome

- Implemented in December 2024
- July 2025: Eliminated pending disability determinations backlog, enabled long standing pending Medicaid applications to be processed
- 2023: Contracted doctors completed 286 reviews
- 2024: Completed 230 reviews (148 from contracted doctors, and 82 from one vendor over last two weeks of December 2024)
- 2025: Completed 3,907 reviews (3,781 by Medical Services Advisors Platform and 126 by previously contracted doctors)
- Between October 2022 and November 2025, completed 4,467 determinations
- Currently able to process determinations within 30 days

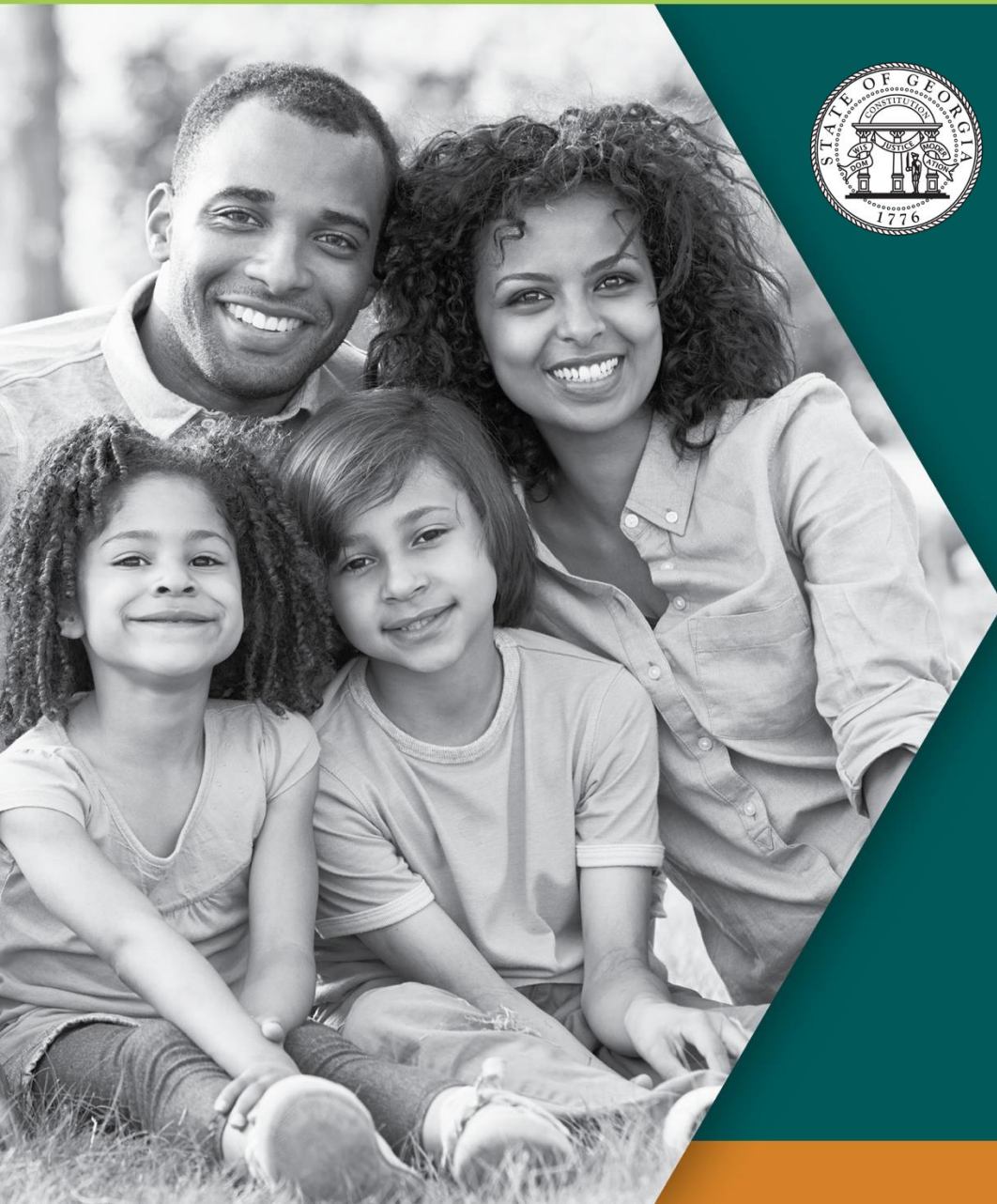


SMEU Disability Decision

Future

- 2026: Shift focus of contracted doctor to quality reviews of vendor's work
 - Goal: complete 10% of total reviews as quality reviews





Georgia Department of Human Services

Child Welfare Updates

Lon Roberts

Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Child Welfare

National Adoption Month



Adoption Data

Adoptions finalized during National Adoption Month (November 2025)	109
Children in Georgia currently eligible for adoption without an identified resource	402
Adoptions finalized in SFY 2025	1,170





BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA

A PROCLAMATION

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

- WHEREAS: In the last state fiscal year, 1,169 children were adopted in the State of Georgia; and
- WHEREAS: Adoptive parents provide the opportunity for children and youth to experience the stability, support, and unconditional love that every child needs to live, grow, and thrive, preparing them for successful adulthood; and
- WHEREAS: The Kemp Administration and Georgia General Assembly continue to prioritize adoption and foster care reform, committing funds and passing legislation to decrease the burden on adoptive parents and create new opportunities; and
- WHEREAS: The State of Georgia and Department of Human Services are committed to educating the public about the need for adoptive families, especially those with a desire to adopt older children, children with complex needs, and sibling groups; and
- WHEREAS: DHS celebrates the families who have opened their hearts and homes for children and encourage Georgians to continue showing their commitment and support in making a difference in children's lives through adoption; now
- THEREFORE: I, BRIAN P. KEMP, Governor of the State of Georgia, do hereby proclaim November 2025, as ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH in Georgia.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Executive Department to be affixed this 22nd day of October in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Twenty-Five.



B. Kemp
GOVERNOR

ATTEST
Laura M. Curry
CHIEF OF STAFF



Clark's Christmas Kids





Georgia Department of Human Services
Division of Aging Services

Georgia Respite Care Study

MaryLea Boatwright Quinn

Assistant Deputy Commissioner

David Watkins

Caregiver Services Specialist



ALL WISH LISTS
FULFILLED!

Light up THE
HOLIDAYS
FOR A VULNERABLE GEORGIAN



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**
Division of Aging Services

Georgia Respite Care Study



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**
Division of Aging Services



UNIVERSITY *of*
NORTH GEORGIA™
INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHY AGING



Respite Study



Members of DAS team pictured with the UNG study team

Respite care provides temporary relief for primary caregivers, offering short-term substitute care so the caregiver can rest, run errands, or handle personal matters. Respite care can help relieve stress and reduce caregiver burnout.

University of North Georgia Healthy Aging Institute

- Principal Investigator: Dr. Pamela Elfenbein
- Contracted in June 2024
- White paper published January 2025



Caregiver Services

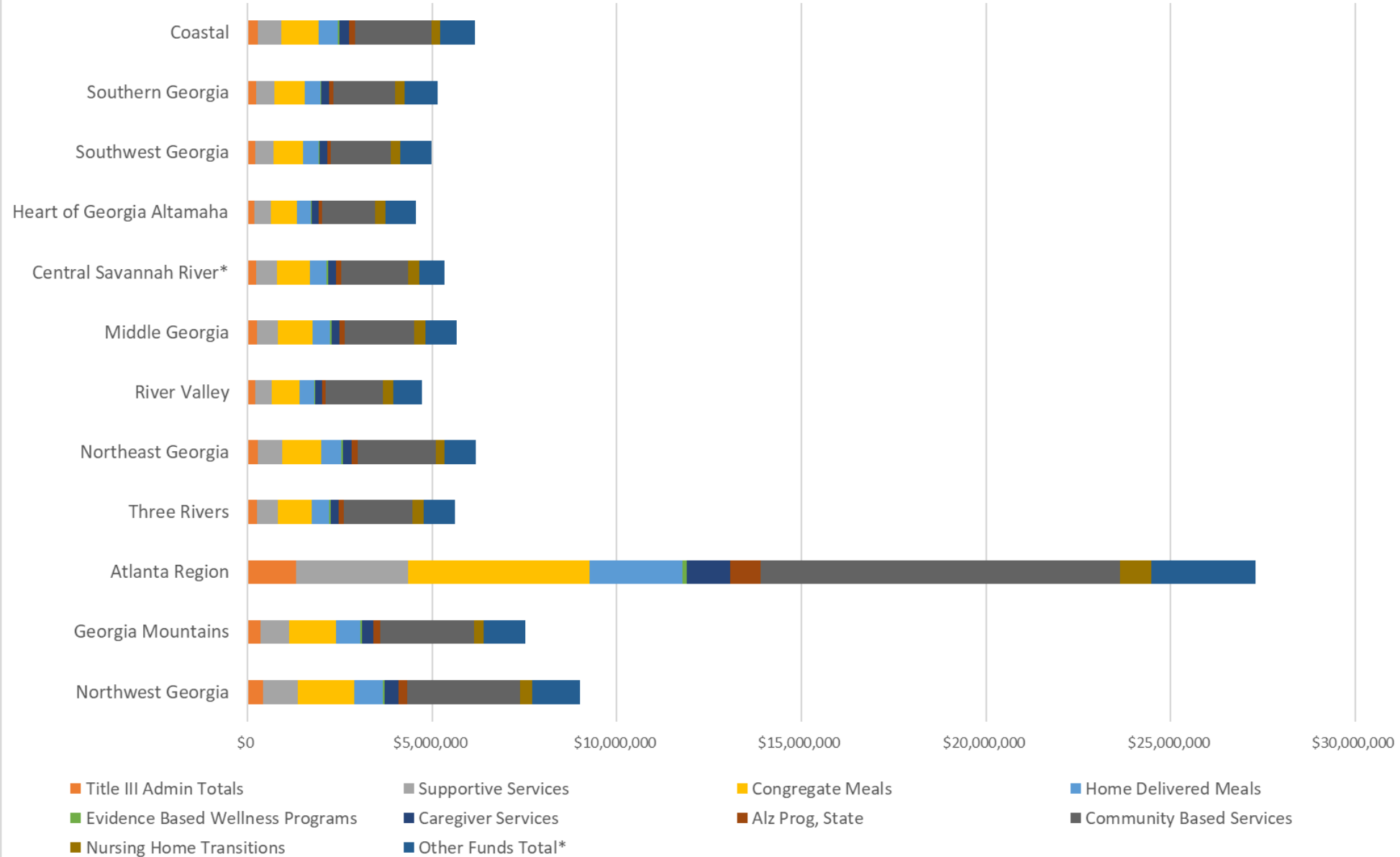
Combined Service Categories for Data Analysis

ServiceType	Service
BRICC	Care Consultation
Case Management	Case Management
Home Delivered Meals	Home Delivered Meals
Homemaker - Voucher	Homemaker - Voucher
MAALL	Material Aid - Individual
	Material Aid - Assistive Technology
	Material Aid - Home Modifications/Home Repair
	Material Aid - Voucher - Individual
	Material Aid - Other - Individual - Voucher
Material Aid - Other - Individual	
Respite Care - Out-of-Home - Voucher	Respite Care - Out-of-Home - Voucher
RHIV	Respite Care - In-Home - Voucher
RIHPCH	Personal Care
	Respite Care - In-Home
	Homemaker
	Respite Care - Out-of-Home
ROHAD	Respite Care - Out-of-Home
	Adult Day Care
	Adult Day Care - Mobile



FY24 Funding by Region and Service Category

FY24 Funding by Region and Category



Georgia Caregiving by the Numbers

24%

of adults in Georgia are family caregivers.

That equates to approximately

2.5M

people.

By 2034

the population of Georgia's adults age 60+ will be

20%!

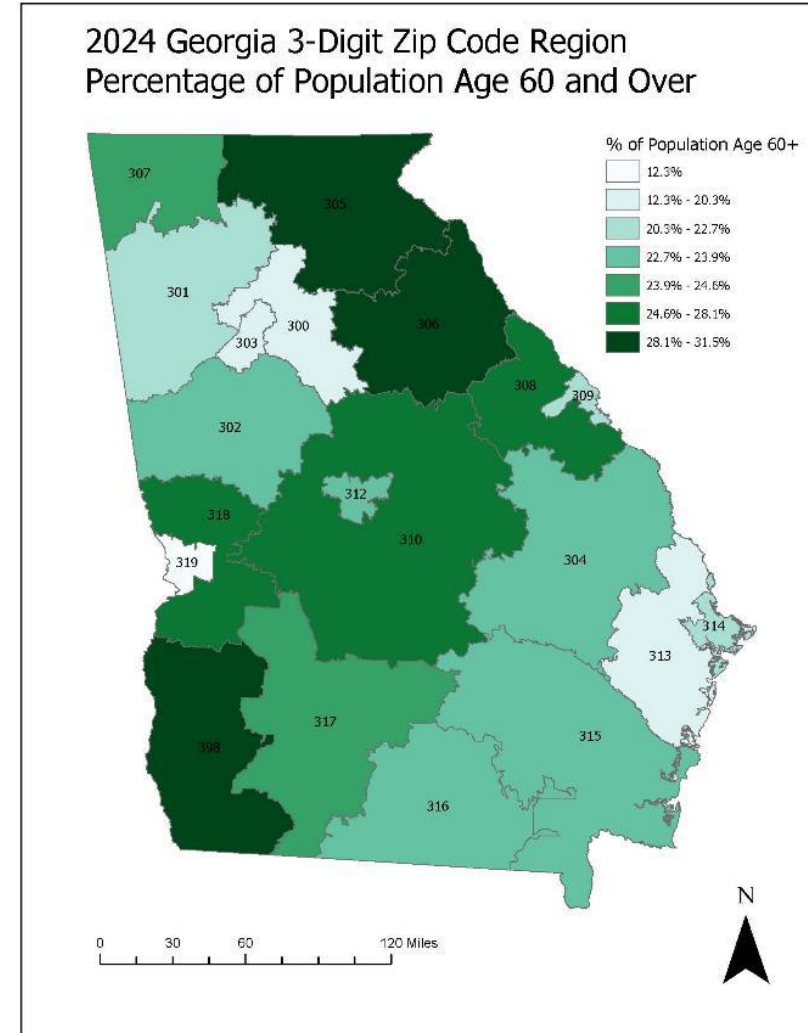
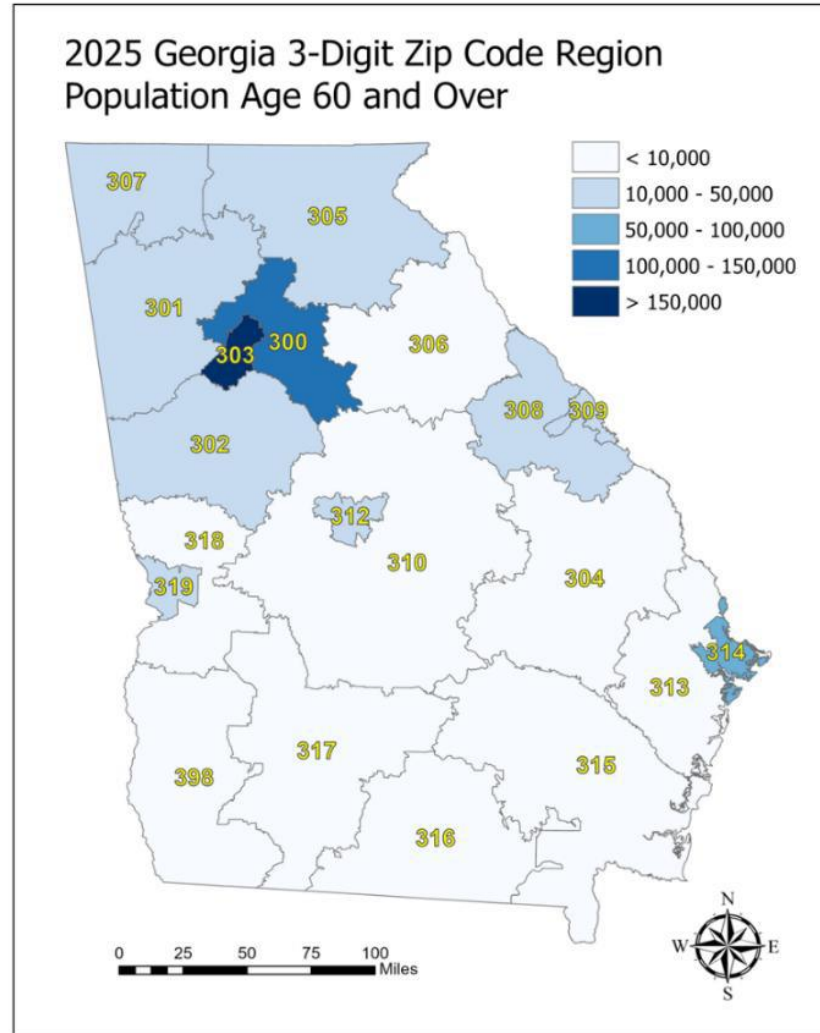


Contract Deliverables

- Provide and discuss examples of policies, programs, and/or **best practices** that could potentially be implemented in Georgia to help serve caregivers more effectively.
- Analyze and evaluate Older Americans Act and state-funded caregiver services **return on investment** utilizing de-identified data provided by DHS-DAS.
- Present all **data analysis**, research, and discussion in a white paper format that describes the complex issues, traditional and non-traditional approaches to respite care, costs of care, and how respite care might better serve to **delay long term care placement**.



Demographics



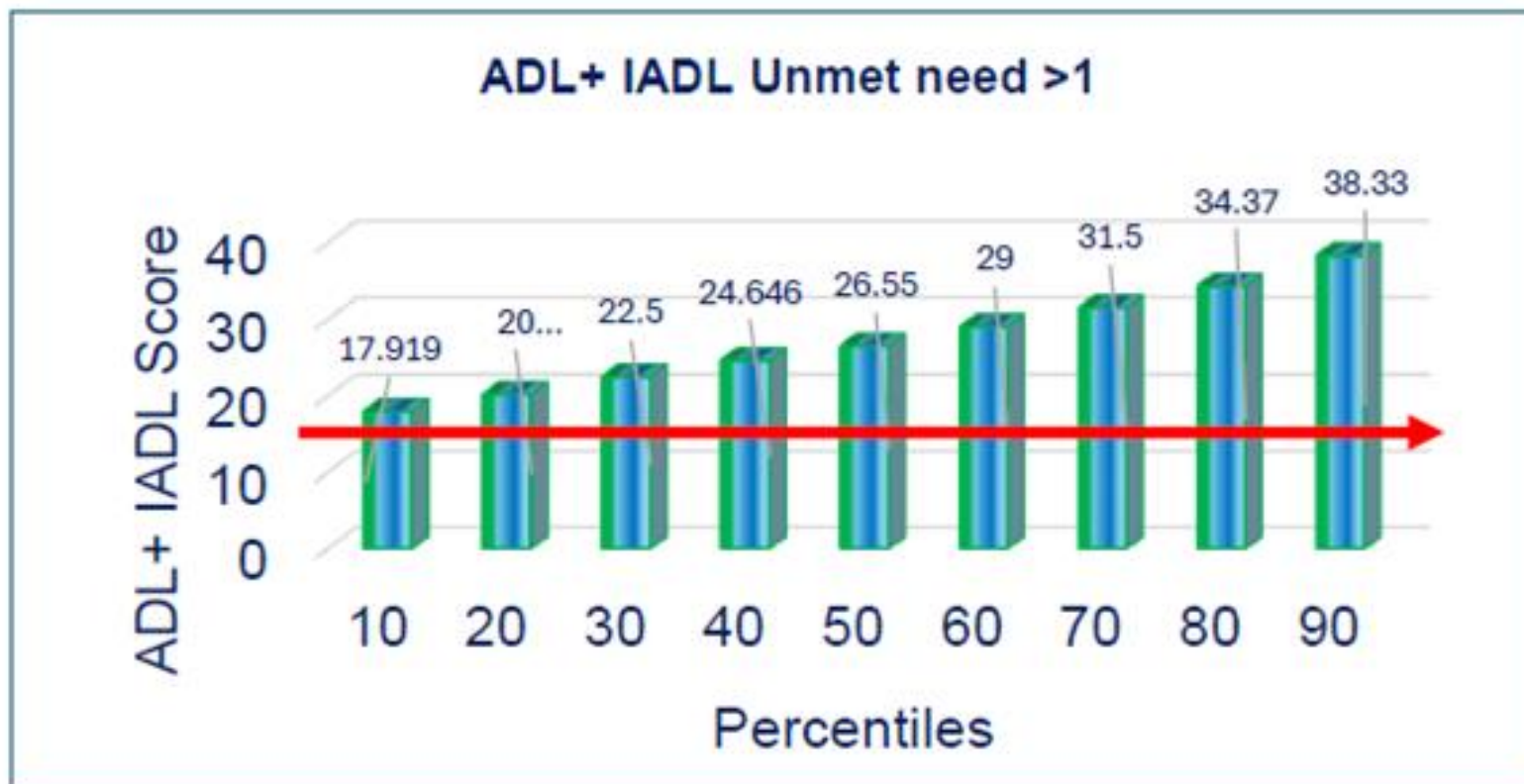
Functional Assessment

Care Receiver level of impairment is assessed using the DON-R (Determination of Need - Revised) assessment

Activities of Daily Living (ADL)
Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL)

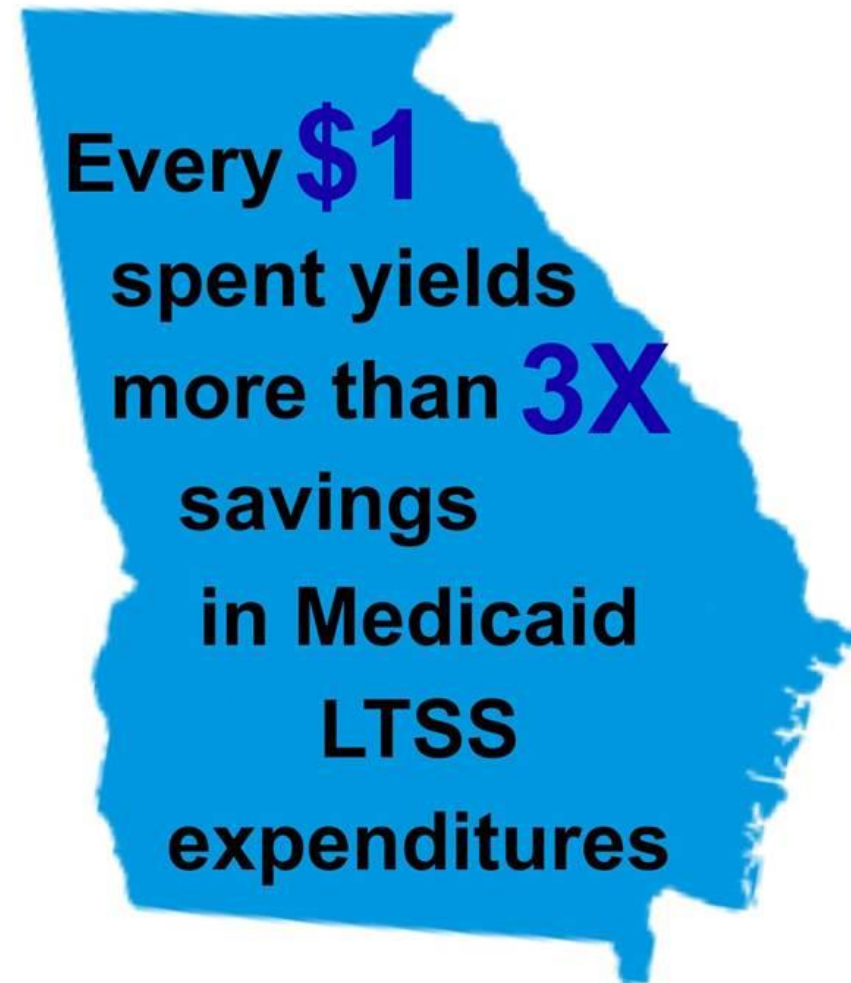
Impairment score to qualify for nursing home care = 15+1 (red arrow)

Scores for the highest 40% of clients are double (or more) the minimum required score for nursing home admittance



Return on Investment (ROI)

The study found that **every dollar invested in respite care generates dollars-saved** in avoided long-term care costs, **underscoring the economic efficiency of caregiver support programs.**



LTSS = Long Term Services and Supports



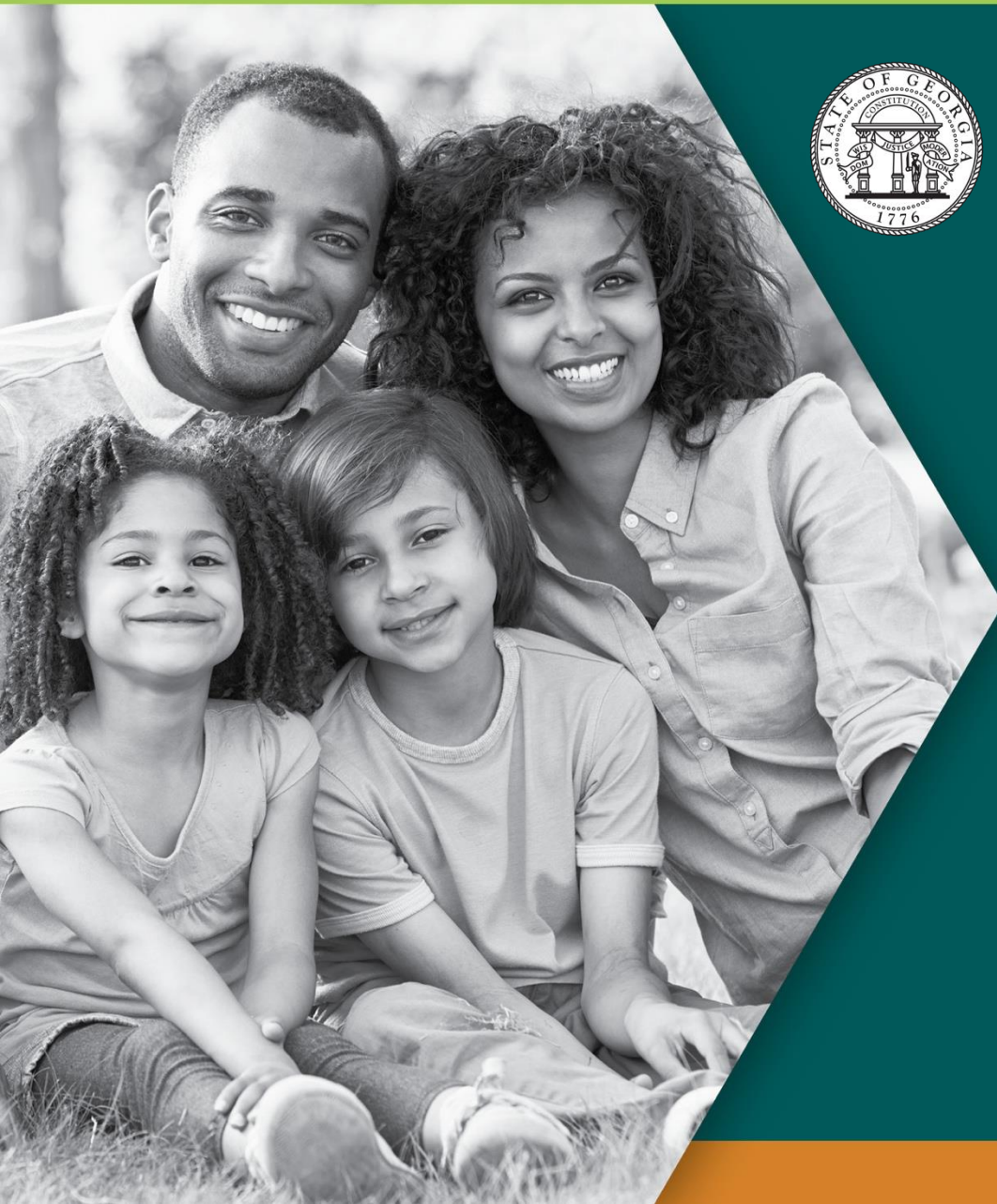
Recommendations

- **Strengthen caregiver navigation and access to resources.**
- **Expand respite services for underserved populations**, particularly those residing in Georgia's most rural regions and with the highest activity of daily living impairment scores and caregiving burden scores.
- **Enhance Return on Investment (ROI) measurement and tools** to better demonstrate the economic and social value of caregiver support.
- **Adopt best practice guidelines** from the Administration for Community Living (ACL), ADvancing States, USAging, and other southeastern states to broaden service delivery and improve outcomes.
- **Address workforce shortages** through innovative recruitment and retention strategies.



Questions?





Georgia Department of Human Services
Division of Child Support Services

Federal Fiscal Year 2025 Performance Outcomes

Sarah Hurst

Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Child Support Services

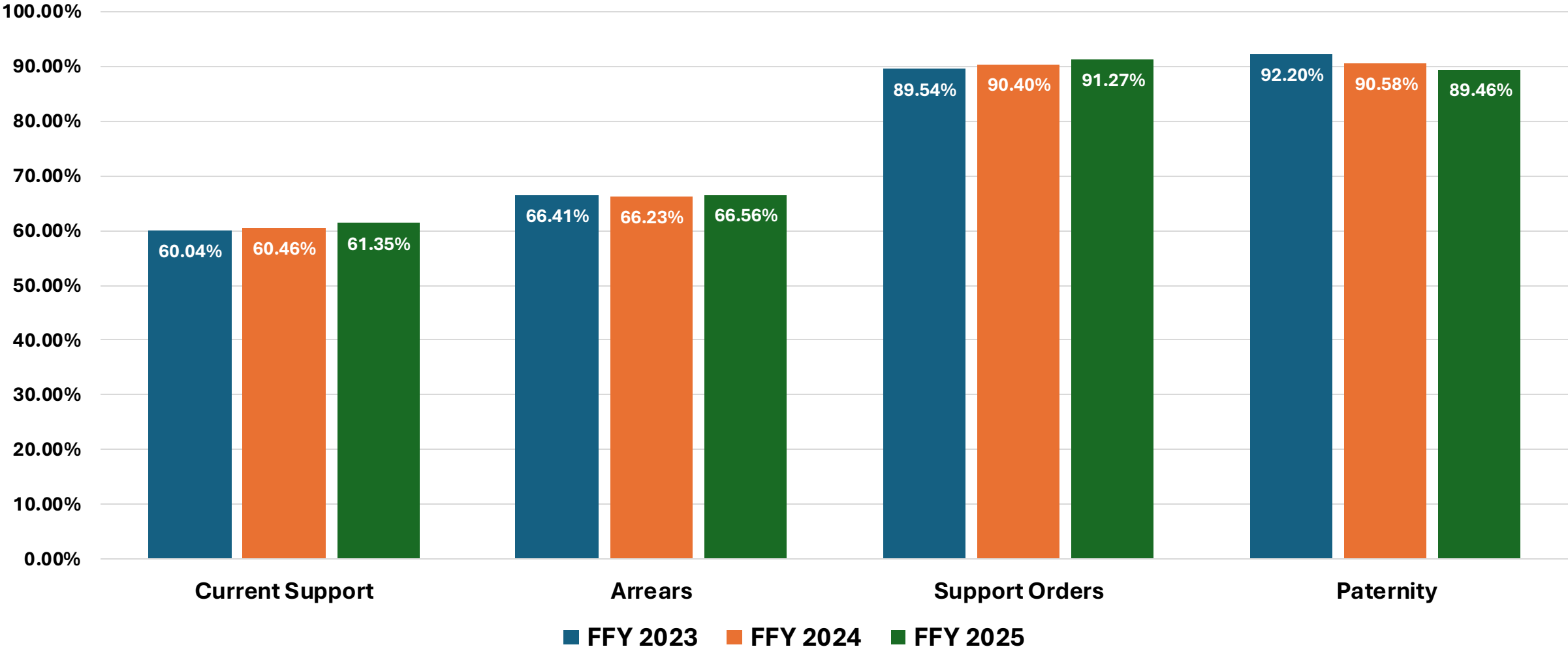
FFY 2025 Year-end Performance Outcomes



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**



FFY 2025: Performance Measures



FFY 2025: Paternity Outcomes

Key Factors Influencing Paternity Performance in FFY 2025

External Influences

- Out-of-wedlock births increased in 2024
- Declines in Paternity Acknowledgements
- Declines in adoptions and legitimations

Program Trends

- DCSS intakes trending downward
- Custodial parent non-cooperation remains a challenge



FFY 2026: Paternity Strategies

Key Initiatives to Improve Paternity Establishment in FFY 2026

Operational Initiatives

- Reinstating the Performance Task Force
- Hosting monthly Paternity Summits

Outreach

- Prioritized hospital outreach
- Enhanced parent outreach letters

Evaluating Alternatives

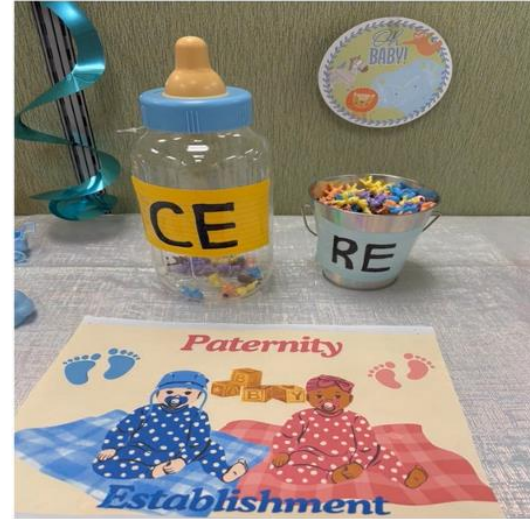
- Exploring the possibility of switching Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP) options



Office Visual Motivations



Office 318 - Newnan



Office 240 – DeKalb



Office 320 – Carrollton



Office 122 – Clayton



IV-D PEP: Opportunities and Risks

Opportunity

- Greater control over outcomes
- Expanded strategic options
- Higher, more stable performance
- Reduced funding risk



Risks

- Increased audit risk
- Greater performance volatility



Additional Program Highlights



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**



Mobile App Highlights

- FFY 2025 mobile app collections - \$57.5 million
 - Apple Pay collections - \$11.8 million
- SFY 2025 mobile app users
 - Strategic plan goal: Increase the number of active DCSS mobile application users from 93,305 to 99,925 by June 30, 2025
 - Results: We ended SFY 2025 with 181,411 unique app users during the fiscal year



Staff Recognitions

- **2025 NCSEA Program Awareness Award:** The Georgia Fatherhood program
- **2025 NCSEA Emerging Leader Award:** Antolette Vinson (child support specialist supervisor)
- **2025 NCSEA Judge Ross Scholarship:** Candis Hayes (Central Registry manager)
- **2025 WICSEC Leadership Achievement Award:** Kamilah Miller (DeKalb County Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA) manager)
- **NCSEA U Graduates:** Derrick Brandon, Carla Clemons, Harolyn Davis-McKee, Tracey Erwin, Candis Hayes, and Dondra Samuel



Questions

Sarah Hurst
Assistant Deputy Commissioner
Georgia Department of Human Services
Division of Child Support Services
sarah.hurst@dhs.ga.gov

*thank
you*





Georgia Department of Human Services
Office of Facilities and Support Services

Board Resolution in Support of Approval of Sewer Easement to Cherokee County

Perry McMillon

Director, Office of Facilities and Support Services

Proposed Board Resolution

- DHS proposes a board resolution to support the approval of a 20-foot easement that crosses the property line of Cherokee County DFCS for the purpose of providing sewer access to Cherokee County's Transportation Department for new construction.
- DHS supports the State Properties Commission's issuance of a revocable license agreement, and their efforts to seek the grant of a non-exclusive easement to install and maintain a sewer easement.



Reason for Request

- State of Georgia owns the property located at 1300 Univeter Road, Canton, Cherokee County, Georgia of which DHS is the custodian.
- State Properties Commission (SPC), as tenant of the property, issues a revocable license agreement (RLA) to Cherokee County and eventually requests the grant by the General Assembly of a non-exclusive sewer easement.
- SPC requests DHS's support of a project, via a board resolution, to issue a RLA and request the grant of an easement that crosses property of which DHS is the custodian.



Request to the Board

To adopt a board resolution to support the issuance by the State Properties Commission of a revocable license agreement and its subsequent request for approval to the General Assembly of a sewer easement to Cherokee County for property located in Cherokee County of which DHS is the custodian.



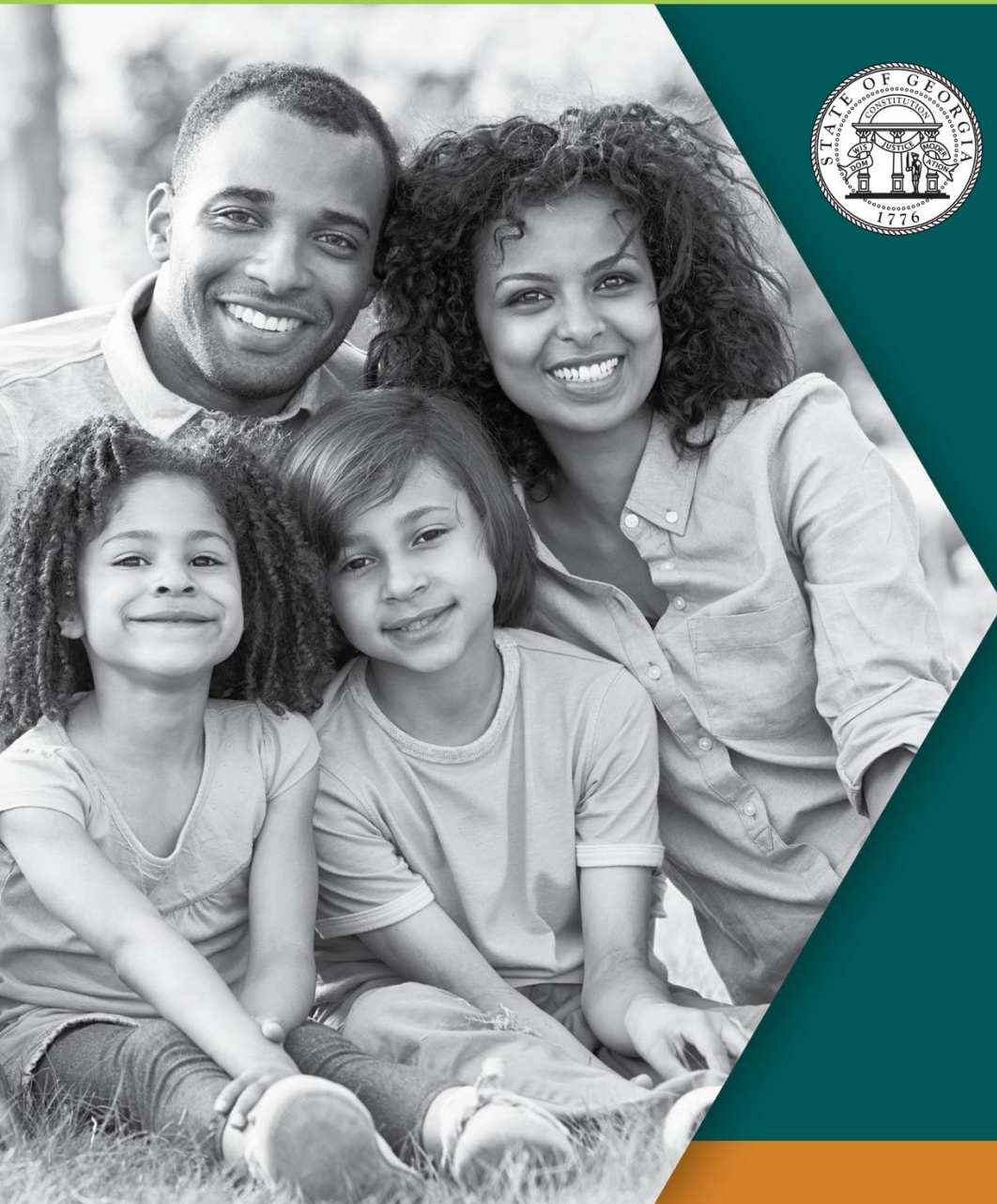
Questions?

Perry McMillon, Director

Office of Facilities and Support Services

perry.mcmillon@dhs.ga.gov





Georgia Department of Human Services
Office of General Counsel

DHS Rule Changes

Office of General Counsel

Byron Cuthbert

Associate General Counsel

Road Map

- Review of Rule Change Procedures
- Initial Approval for Amendments to Rule 290-7-1-.01 through Rule 290-7-1-.20
- Request to Board



Rule Change Procedure

1. Board Considers Motion to Publish Proposed Rule
2. 30-Day Public Comment Period
3. Public Hearing
4. Motion for Final Adoption of Proposed Rule
5. Send Final Rule to Secretary of State



Division of Child Support Services

Rule 290-7-1-.01 – Legal Authority

Current Rule:

- 290-7-1-.01

Proposed Change:

- Amends name of rule chapter to Division of Child Support Services
- Updates statutory citations to accurately reflect legal citations
- Removes table of contents; no substantive procedural changes.



Division of Child Support Services

Rule 290-7-1-.03 – Definitions

Current Rule:

- 290-7-1-.03

Proposed Change:

- Revises and expands definitions for accuracy, clarity, and alignment with state and federal requirements.
- Adds new terms: alleged father, child support guidelines, court order, dependent child, extreme hardship, genetic testing, income withholding, license, licensing entity, parenting time adjustment.
- Clarifies definitions: consent order, enforcement deferral, IV-D order.
- Replaces 'putative obligor' with 'alleged father' for consistency.



Division of Child Support Services

Rule 290-7-1-.04 – Establishment of Child Support Obligation

Current Rule:

- 290-7-1-.04

Proposed Change:

- Clarifies when paternity should be established.
- Clarifies procedures for genetic testing.
- Updates provisions on consent agreements, hearings, and public assistance referrals.
- Eliminates outdated terminology and aligns with state and federal guidance



Division of Child Support Services

Rule 290-7-1-.06 – Periodic Review & Modification

Current Rule:

- 290-7-1-.06

Proposed Change:

- Clarifies modification requests governed by O.C.G.A. § 19-11-12.
- Adds standards for reasonable-cost medical coverage ($\leq 5\%$ of gross income).
- Adds a prohibition of retroactive modification prior to petition filing.



Division of Child Support Services

Rule 290-7-1-.12 – License Suspensions & Limited Driving Permits

Current Rule:

- 290-7-1-.12

Proposed Change:

- Clarifies Limited Driving Permit program provisions for extreme hardship cases.
- Adds defined eligibility and review standards.
- Adds authority for administrative hearings concerning limited permits.



Division of Child Support Services

Rule 290-7-1-.15 – Allocation & Redirection of Payments

Current Rule: Proposed Change:

- 290-7-1-.15
- Clarifies allocation rules among multiple obligees.
- Allows redirection of excess or misapplied payments to arrears or updated custodial arrangements.
- Requires administrative hearing when parties dispute redirection.



Public Comment Period

- **Rules Published for Public Comment**
January 8, 2026 – February 7, 2026
- **Public Hearing to be Held**
January 13, 2026



Request to Board

Motion to Publish Notice of Rulemaking

Amendments to Rule 290-7-1-.01
through Rule 290-7-1-.20



Questions?

Byron Cuthbert

Associate General Counsel

Byron.Cuthbert@dhs.ga.gov





**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Meeting Break



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Board Vote

Cherokee County Easement



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Rule Change Proposal

DCSS Rule Change



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Minutes Approval for October 8, 2025



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Committee Updates



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

New Business & Closing Comments