

Georgia Adoption Assistance- Who Do You Contact?

State Contact information

Adoption Assistance Specialist	ICAMA Compact Administrator Or Contact
<p>NAME: Gail M. Greer</p> <p>ADDRESS: Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Family and Children Services Office of Adoptions 2 Peachtree Street, N.W., Suite 8-400 Atlanta, Georgia 30303</p> <p>E-MAIL: gmgreer@dhr.state.ga.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 404.657.3558</p>	<p>NAME: Gail M. Greer</p> <p>ADDRESS: Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Family and Children Services Office of Adoptions 2 Peachtree St., N.W., Suite 8-400 Atlanta, Georgia 30303</p> <p>E-MAIL: gmgreer@dhr.state.ga.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 404.657.3558</p>
Adoption Program Manager or Contact	ICPC Compact Administrator Or Contact
<p>NAME: Ann B. Deibel</p> <p>ADDRESS: Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Family and Children Services Office of Adoptions 2 Peachtree St., N.W., Suite 8-400 Atlanta, Georgia 30303</p> <p>E-MAIL: abdeibel@dhr.state.ga.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 404.657.3563</p>	<p>NAME: (position currently vacant)</p> <p>ADDRESS: Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Family and Children Services Office of Adoptions 2 Peachtree St., N.W., Suite 8-40 Atlanta, Georgia 30303</p> <p>E-MAIL:</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 404.657.3564</p>
Post Adoption Services Contact	Medical Assistance Specialist
<p>NAME: Kolean Thompkins</p> <p>ADDRESS: Georgia Department Human Resources Division of Family and Children Services 2 Peachtree St, N.W., Suite 8-400 Atlanta, Georgia 30303</p> <p>E-MAIL: kbthompk@dhr.state.ga.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 404.463.3957</p>	<p>NAME: Theresa Johnson</p> <p>ADDRESS: Georgia Department of Community Health 2 Peachtree St., 39th Floor Atlanta, Georgia 30303</p> <p>E-MAIL: tjohnson@dhr.state.ga.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 404.657.7263</p>

Adoption Assistance- Who is Eligible?

A good place to start. Public adoption in Georgia is administered by the Department of Human Resources, (DHR), Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS), Office of Adoptions. DHR and adoption links: <http://dhr.georgia.gov/02/dhr/home/0,2274,5696,00.html> and www.adoptions.dhr.state.ga.us/toc.htm.

1. What specific factors or conditions does your state consider to determine that a child cannot be placed with adoptive parents without providing financial assistance? ("What is your state definition of special needs?")

A child with special needs is defined as a child that has at least one of the following needs or circumstances that may be a barrier to placement or adoption without financial assistance:

- Eight years of age or older
- African American heritage and one year of age or older
- Member of a sibling group of three or more children placed together at the same time
- Member of a sibling group of two children to be placed together where one child is eight years of age or older or has another special need as defined herein
- A documented physical, emotional, or mental problems or limitations, or a predisposition there from

Note: Children must be legally free for adoption to be eligible for adoption assistance.

2. What are the eligibility criteria for your state-funded adoption assistance program?

In order to be eligible for state-funded adoption assistance a child must be a special needs child as defined above, legally free for adoption, and have been in the permanent custody of the Georgia Department of Human Resources.

3. What is the maximum amount a family may receive in non-recurring adoption expenses from your state? Adoptive parents can receive reimbursement of certain approved, "one-time" adoption expenses incurred in the process of finalizing a special needs adoption.

\$2,000.00 per child, per placement

4. Does your state enter into deferred adoption assistance agreements? In some states, adoptive parents can enter into an agreement in which they choose to defer the receipt of a Medicaid card, the monthly monetary payment, or both and can elect to receive the Medicaid card and/or monetary payment at another time.

Georgia offers deferred adoption assistance. If a child does not meet the definition of a child with special needs prior to adoption finalization, a deferred adoption assistance application is completed by the adopting parent(s). If a condition develops in the child at a later date that is related to the child's background factors, adoption assistance and Medicaid may be instated at the time the condition is known and a determination of special needs is made. The benefit would be equal to the amount the child received as a family foster care board rate prior to adoptive placement.

5. When may adoption assistance payments and benefits begin in your state?

Adoption assistance payments and benefits may begin in Georgia at adoptive placement.

6. How are changes made to the adoption assistance agreement in your state?

- a. When can a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement?
- b. How does a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement?
- c. What if a parent does not receive the change they request in the adoption assistance agreement?

Adoptive parents may request a change in the adoption assistance agreement at any time. Parents are directed to make change requests to the social services case manager who is responsible for their child's adoption assistance. If parents feel they are being denied benefits or disagree with an agency's decision regarding adoption assistance, they may request a fair hearing. Every adoption assistance agreement and annual renewal form the parents receive indicates the name, address and phone number of the county department that is responsible for child's adoption assistance benefits. Requests may be made in person, in writing, or over the phone. If a fair hearing is requested, this must be in writing and made to the social services case manager in the county that is responsible for the adoption assistance. Policy does not allow for an increase in the adoption assistance benefit beyond the amount the child received in family foster care immediately prior to the adoptive placement. However, the family may have other requests such as post adoption services, referrals for community and/or agency resources, a change of address, etc. Any requests or notifications by the parents are made to the case manager. This is outlined in the adoption assistance agreement. If an adoptive family is unsuccessful in making contact with the case manager, they should contact the supervisor or county director. DFCS county contact link:

http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/00/channel_modifieddate/0,2410,3815890_3819758,00.html.

Adoption Assistance- Post Adoption Services

7. What types of post adoption services are available in your state and how do I find out more about them?

Post adoption services in Georgia are administered by the Department of Human Resources through the DFCS, Office of Adoptions and community resources. DHR post adoption services include the following examples:

1. Center for Adoption Resources and Support
2. Camp Promise (camps for children)
3. A-Team (teen support group)
4. Crisis Intervention Team (therapeutic intervention, family case management)
5. Respite
6. Tutoring
7. Adoption Reunion Registry
8. Support Groups

Each county department has a local listing that adoptive families may call. In addition, a toll free number for the Georgia Center for Adoption Resources and Support is available and will provide families with information relating to resources, support groups, local and statewide adoption related activities. The number for the resource center is 1.866.A.Parent (1.866.272.7368).

Various adoptive parent support groups and community resources exist throughout the state. Research the Office of Adoptions post adoption services link: www.adoptions.dhr.state.ga.us/pstadopt2.htm or contact your local DFCS case manager. DFCS county contact link: http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/00/channel_modifieddate/0,2410,3815890_3819758,00.html.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or post adoption services contact for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

Adoption Assistance- Medical assistance

8. What mental health services are provided by your state?

Public mental health services for children in Georgia are administered through the Department of Community Health (DCH), Division of Medical Assistance and include the following examples: psychological services, in-patient hospital services, mental health clinic services, targeted case management for the chronically mentally ill, therapeutic residential intervention, and pharmacy services. DMA and Medicaid covered services links: www.communityhealth.state.ga.us/ and www.communityhealth.state.ga.us/.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or medical assistance specialist for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

9. Does your state provide additional finances or services for medial or therapeutic needs not covered under your state medical plan to children receiving adoption assistance?

Georgia provides limited funding under the *Special Services Adoption Assistance Program*. Funds are available for children who were ineligible for a higher level of adoption assistance payments at the time of placement and whose needs have changed or increased. *Special Services* funds are available only to children who had been in the permanent custody of DHR. *Special Services* funds are approved on an annual basis. These funds are contingent on availability and need. Family income and availability of community resources is considered in these requests. *Special Services* funds are provided by a separate agreement. The county social services case manager is the source of contact for application. DFCS county contact link: http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/00/channel_modifieddate/0,2410,3815890_3819758,00.html.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

Adoption Assistance- Fair Hearings

10. What is your state's process for applying for a fair hearing? A fair hearing is a legal, administrative procedure that provides a forum to address disagreements with agency decisions.

Adoptive families can request a fair hearing any time there is a disagreement with a DFCS decision affecting their child's adoption assistance agreement. Parents are directed to contact their local county Department of Family and Children Services to request a fair hearing. All requests must be made in writing and provided to the county DFCS case manager who will send a formal referral to the Legal Services Department of DHR for processing. DHR in turn forwards the request to the Office of State Administrative Hearings. The Office of State Administrative Hearings will notify the family, in writing, of the date and location of the hearing. Hearings are usually held in the county of residence of the petitioner. Requests for an administrative hearing by telephone are possible. The request for a telephone hearing must be made in

writing to the fair hearing officer identified in the hearing notice. Locator link: http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/00/channel_modifieddate/0,2410,3815890_3819758,00.html

After the bureau of state hearings receives a request for a fair hearing, a notice giving the date, time, and place of the hearing is sent to adoptive parents. This notice will be sent at least ten days before the hearing. The notice also will tell parents what to do if they cannot come to the hearing as scheduled. Families may bring witnesses, friends, relatives, or a lawyer to help them present their case. The hearing officer will listen to both sides but will not make a decision at the hearing. Instead, parents will receive a written decision in the mail, issued by the hearing authority, a few weeks later. Parents should receive a hearing decision within ninety days of their hearing request. The hearing officer will record the hearing so that the facts are taken down correctly. After the hearing decision is issued, parents can get a free copy of the tape by contacting the hearings section. If parents disagree with the hearing decision, the written decision sent to them will explain how to ask for an administrative appeal of the decision.

Adoption Assistance- Web/Internet Information

11. What is your state Web address for general adoption information?

Georgia's general adoption links: www.adoptions.dhr.state.ga.us/ and www.adoptions.dhr.state.ga.us/toc.htm.

12. What is your state Web address for adoption assistance information?

Georgia's adoption assistance link: www.adoptions.dhr.state.ga.us/financia.htm.

13. What is your state Web address for state-specific medical assistance information for children?

Georgia's state-specific medial assistance link: www.communityhealth.state.ga.us/.