



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

DFCS State Advisory Board Meeting

March 11, 2025



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Committee Breakout Session

Meeting will begin around 10:45 a.m.

Livestream will return after committee meetings



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Welcome & Attendance



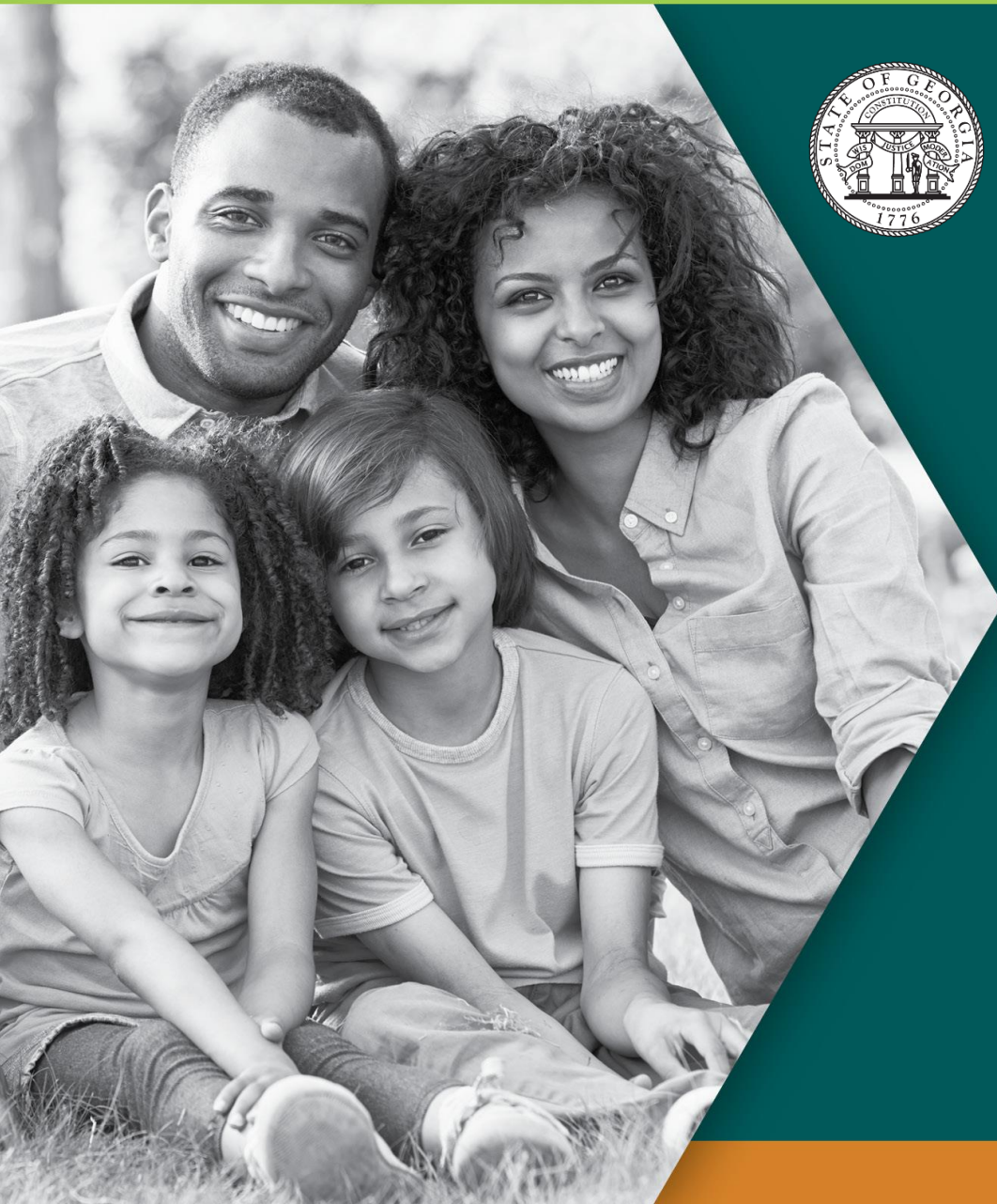
**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Agenda Approval



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Nov. 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes Approval



Georgia Department of Human Services

Child Welfare Updates and Initiatives

Lon Roberts

Deputy Commissioner, Child Welfare

AFPAG Conference



AFPAG's Case Manager of the Year

- Michelle Stinson is a Social Services Specialist 3 in Region 9.
- She has been with DFCS for over 20 years.



Social Work Month

"Connecting with youth in care and foster caregivers helped me understand the profound impact this field has on children, families, and communities. I discovered a passion for matching children with foster parents who could meet their unique needs and provide a nurturing environment to help them heal while their biological parents worked towards healing and completing their case plans."

- **Garret Pierce | CRRU Administrator**



Social Work Month

"One key strength that I bring to my career is that I can build trust with my clients through empathy. My goal is to create a safe, non-judgmental space for all my families to express themselves, which allows for open and honest communication. I believe when clients feel their voice is heard and understood, they are more open to receiving help."

- **Shaina Francois | Social Services Specialist**



Social Work Month

"In a previous case, I had a mother who was able to secure housing but unable to furnish the apartment with the items needed to reunify with her children. With donations from the community, I was able to help this mother fully furnish her apartment. Ultimately, the children were successfully reunified with their mother."

- **Chelsea Hasty | Foster Care Case Manager**



Social Work Month

"My favorite clients are my teenagers. I love helping them feel important by encouraging them to talk to the judges, helping them write out their thoughts prior to hearings, and teaching them how to dress appropriately. I love empowering them to continue learning on a college pathway by attending their ILP meetings and purchasing that college t-shirt for them when they receive their acceptance letter"

- **Stephanie Scott | Social Services Specialist II**



Teens Are For Me



Qualified Residential Treatment Program Pilot

- We executed a contract with Murphy Harpst in Cedartown to pilot the State's first Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP).
- These facilities will be a vital resource for children with complex mental or behavioral needs.
- The 10-bed facility for boys opened on Jan. 27, 2025, and is already at capacity.



Housing Choice Voucher Programs

- **Foster Youth to Independence (FYI):**
 - Provides housing choice vouchers (HCV) assistance available to public housing agencies in partnership with public child welfare agencies for youth in foster care between the ages of 18-24.
- **Family Unification Program (FUP):**
 - Assists youth in foster care between the ages of 18-24 and/or supports families in the process of reunification.
- We currently have six MOUs with housing authorities across Georgia.



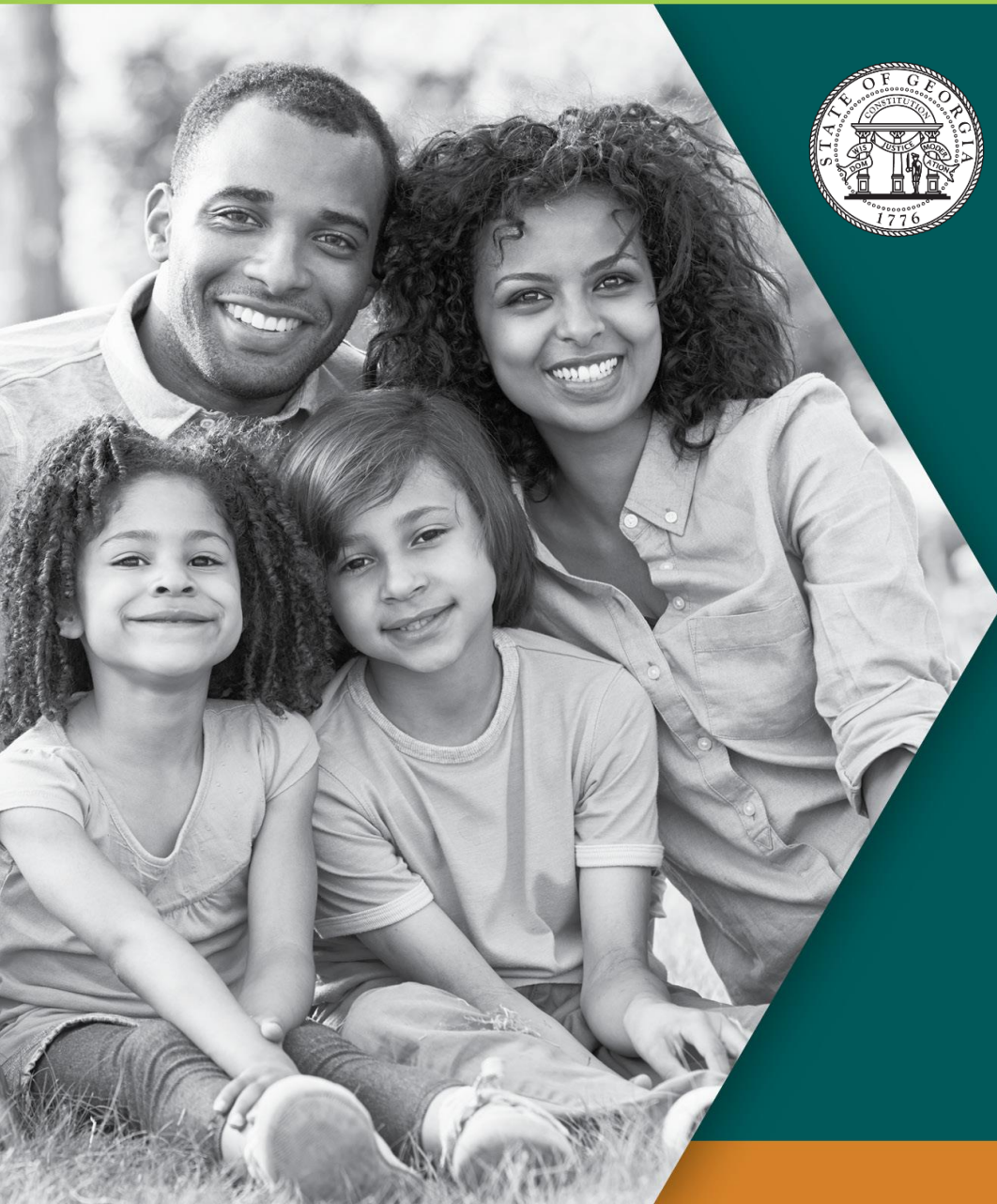
Questions?

Lon Roberts

Deputy Commissioner | Child Welfare

lon.roberts@dhs.ga.gov





Georgia Department of Human Services

Office of Family Independence Updates and Initiatives

John Hallman

Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Family Independence

OFI Updates

- Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP)



- Gateway Provider Portal Enhancements



D-SNAP

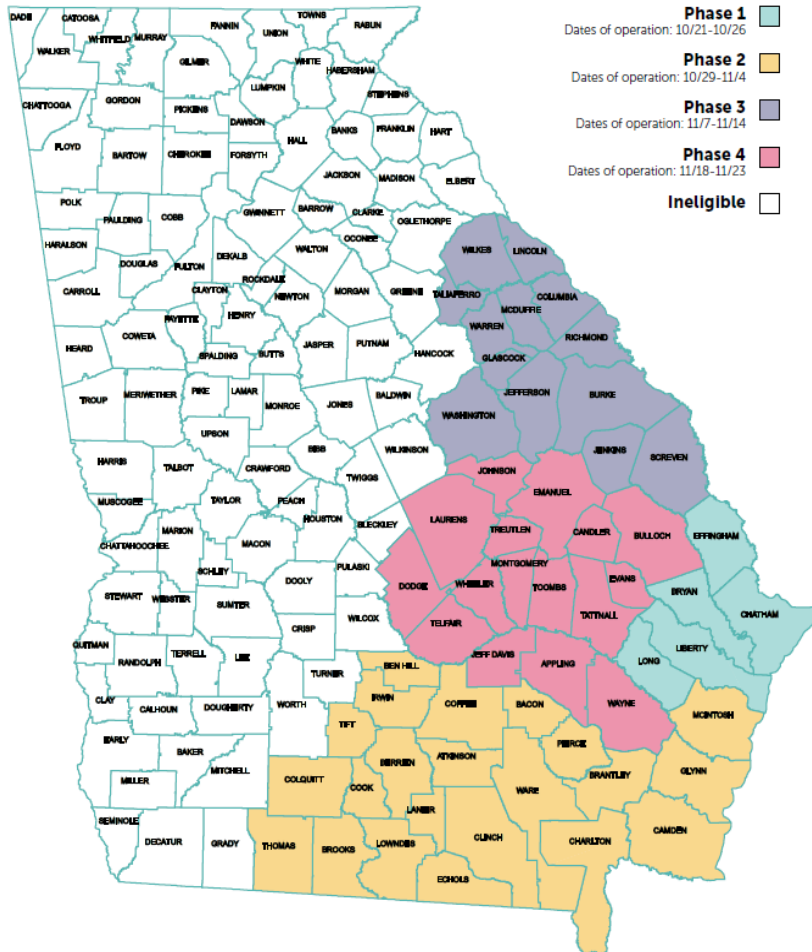
The Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) provides eligible low- to moderate- income households with help buying groceries due to lost income or damages following a disaster.

- **Counties Eligible**
 - Counties must be included in the Presidential Declaration of Individual and Public Assistance to be eligible for D-SNAP.
- **Individual Benefits and Eligibility**
 - D-SNAP is a one-time payment for the purchase of food to eligible households that are not current SNAP recipients.
 - A household must live or work in the identified disaster area, have been affected by the disaster, and meet certain D-SNAP eligibility requirements to receive D-SNAP benefits.
- **Supplements for Existing Customers**



Hurricane Helene D-SNAP

Counties Eligible for Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP)



- D-SNAP operated in a phased approach for 50+ counties:
 - **Phase 1:** Bryan, Chatham, Effingham, Liberty, and Long counties
 - **Phase 2:** Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Camden, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Colquitt, Cook, Echols, Glynn, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, McIntosh, Pierce, Thomas, Tift, and Ware counties
 - **Phase 3:** Burke, Columbia, Glascock, Jefferson, Jenkins, Lincoln, McDuffie, Richmond, Screven, Taliaferro, Warren, and Washington counties
 - **Phase 4:** Appling, Bulloch, Candler, Dodge, Emanuel, Evans, Jeff Davis, Johnson, Laurens, Montgomery, Tattnall, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Wayne, and Wheeler counties
- Estimated 500,000+ eligible households
- Estimated need of 1,200+ volunteers for each phase



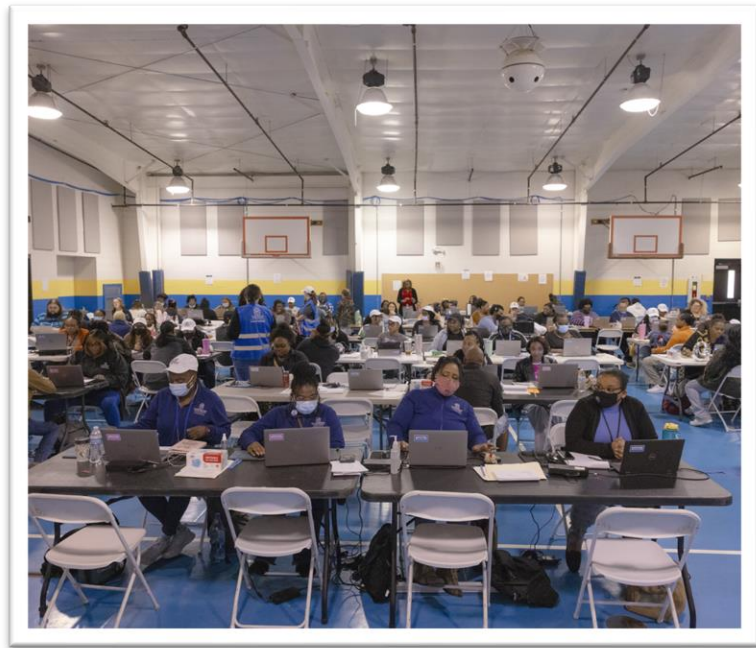
Hurricane Helene D-SNAP

Largest D-SNAP operation run in Georgia to date

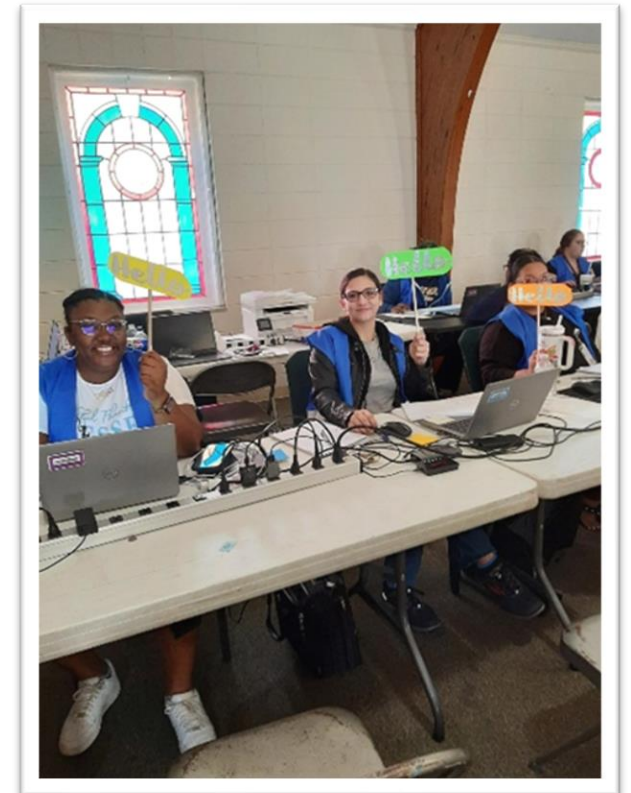
- New applications processed: **189,345**
 - On-site: **84,649**
 - Telephonic: **104,696**
- Households served: **176,325**
- Individuals served: **408,156**
- Benefits disbursed: **\$104,579,860**
- Average benefit per household: **\$593**
- Households approved for Supplements: **93,991**
- Individuals approved for Supplements: **190,865**
- Supplemental benefits disbursed: **\$21,753,239**
- Average supplement for SNAP household: **\$231**



D-SNAP Scenes and Experiences



D-SNAP Scenes and Experiences



Gateway Provider Portal Enhancements

We updated the Provider Portal to give nursing home providers a more user-friendly experience. The new dashboard includes a new welcome page and allows users to:

- Track overdue renewals, current renewals, and other clients
- View case details, renewal due dates, and case statuses
- Filter and sort the renewals data
- Export renewals data to Excel
- Submit renewals and changes from the dashboard
- Submit DMA59s and Communicators from the dashboard
- View and upload verification for pending verification checklists (VCLs)
- View information for deceased clients based on data received from federal partners



Provider Portal Enhancement Feedback

- Since implementation on Jan. 27, 2025, 83 new providers have inquired about portal access, and we have received 150 inquiries from existing providers to add new users.
- Several nursing homes that previously had access to the portal but stopped using it, are now requesting reactivation due to the enhancements.
- We host monthly calls with providers in each OFI District, and we have our Provider Portal lead joining each district's provider calls, sharing the training information, answering questions, and working with providers directly as needed.
- Overall, providers are excited about the enhancements and have expressed their appreciation to the attention we've given to the portal.
- Plan additional engagement with the provider community to increase awareness and adoption of the system.



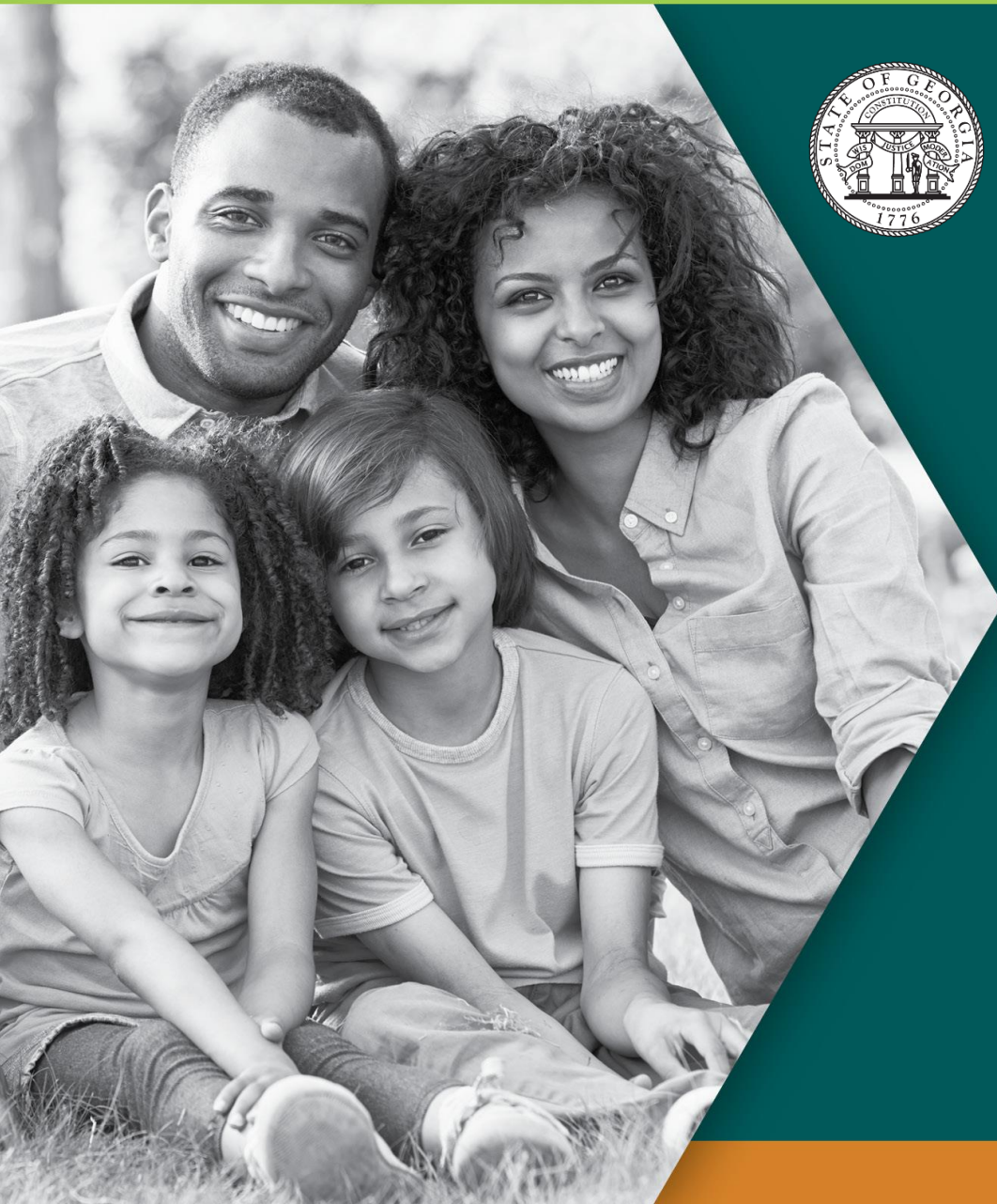
Questions?

John Hallman

Deputy Commissioner | Office of Family Independence

john.hallman1@dhs.ga.gov





Georgia Department of Human Services

Agency Legislation

Emma McCullough

Director of Governmental Affairs

Senate Bill 8

Sponsor: Senator Kay Kirkpatrick

Summary: Provides clarity on Juvenile Court judges' authority to issue arrest warrants for adults when evidence in their court establishes probable cause to believe a criminal act has been committed.

Status: House Rules



Senate Bill 98

Sponsor: Senator Bill Cowsert

Summary: Clarifies provisions in Title 29 relating to the terms “Guardian” and “Conservator”.

Status: House Committee



Questions?

Emma McCullough

Director of Governmental Affairs

emma.mccullough1@dhs.ga.gov





**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Committee Reports



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Regional Reports



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Closing Comments