

GEORGIA



STATE OF

hope

The Hope Toolkit

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Introduction

The Hope Toolkit is intended to provide prospective applicants with valuable information about the State of Hope (SOH) Application Process and links to useful resources. Please utilize it to your advantage.

WHAT'S NEW

Since 2018, the State of Hope (SOH) Ecosystem has grown to include over 250 designated sites throughout Georgia that are actively engaged in positively impacting child well-being in their communities through the four Opportunities of Hope: Education, Trauma-Awareness, Quality Caregiving, and Economic Self-Sufficiency.

This year, SOH places priority consideration on supporting Big Ideas that promote one or more of Georgia's Objectives for Prevention. Those objectives are to increase economic stability, family resiliency, mental and physical health, access to early childhood education, and increasing knowledge of the prevention of child abuse/neglect.

We have updated the toolkit to include additional resources around [Georgia's Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Plan](#) in the Hope Connections section that may be useful in understanding this year's prioritized focus areas and completing the application process.

Please be sure to review the application carefully and select the category that best describes your relation to the State of Hope.

Why Hope?

WHY HOPE FOR GEORGIA?

Families deserve to be safe and supported in their local communities, having resources that are designed with their input.

Additionally, there are high numbers of children in foster care, resources are limited, many individuals and families are in crisis and local communities often have the best answers to address their local needs.

The importance of communities being able to support and take care of families cannot be understated. The work of the Division needs to be seen as the last resort for the most urgent cases, not the solution for all issues. To do this, we need the community's help.

This is the right work at this right time.

Want to know more?

Download the
One-Pager in PDF here.



Connect With Us!



Website

dfcs.georgia.gov/state-hope



Apply to be a State of Hope site!

<https://goapply2.akoyago.com/gphsa/Identity/Account/Login>



Frequently Asked Questions



Email

stateofhope@dhs.ga.gov

Why Hope?

WHAT IS STATE OF HOPE?



Click the images above to watch the videos!

The State of Hope is a movement throughout Georgia to create communities where children are safe, thriving, and full of hope. Our mission is to cultivate family-centered support systems by connecting, equipping, and nurturing diverse community collaborators.

The State of Hope is an initiative that seeks to activate communities, including nonprofits, philanthropies, government, businesses and other community members to collaborate closely to build local safety nets that will prevent conditions that contribute to disparities in education, threaten a family's self-sufficiency and could lead to child abuse and neglect. Although this is not a foster care initiative, ultimately through State of Hope we desire to activate communities around prevention efforts to keep children from entering the foster care system in the first place.

It is a collaborative approach in which people from all walks of life share a vision of safety and success for every child, family and individual who lives in their community. As a result, children are safer, families are stronger, and communities are more supportive places for all its members to thrive.

The State of Hope is an inclusive network that provides welcoming opportunities for youth, families and supporters to create a better quality of life for Georgians by leveraging the collective wisdom of communities. This value proposition, created by the Statewide Design Team, outlines what the State of Hope ultimately aims to accomplish.

Why Hope?

The State of Hope builds off the Communities of Hope concept started by Casey Family Programs and the work of the Northwest Georgia System of Care Advisory Council (SOC) and the Northwest Georgia Region of Hope. Georgia is the first state in the country to attempt a State of Hope – identifying and anchoring multiple Region of Hope sites across the state.

The Division has four Opportunities for Hope for this initiative. These are the priority areas that we believe will have the greatest impact on keeping children safe, strengthening families and empowering communities. The hope is that applications for potential State of Hope projects are focused on one or more of these opportunity areas.

Education – improving the educational attainment of vulnerable youth, most importantly the graduation rates of youth in foster care

Trauma-Awareness – increasing the awareness of trauma informed practices, the impact of trauma and how to mitigate its impact

Quality Caregiving – improving the quality of caregiving across a continuum including, but not limited to, birth parents, kin caregivers, foster/adoptive parents and the larger caregiver community

Economic Self-sufficiency – strengthening and supporting individuals and families on their path toward independence

What separates the State of Hope from other collaborative initiatives is the use of human-centered design thinking and having the voices of youth and communities at the center of the design process. Selected State of Hope sites will be able to take the ideas that have been designed by youth and community members in order to inform the strategies they choose to implement through their projects (the design-within-a-design concept). Human-centered design is a creative approach to problem solving which involves keeping the people you are designing for at the center of the process and tailoring solutions that meet their unique needs.

While the Division does not solely “own” the State of Hope and the transformative work that can only happen within individual communities, we have committed to be the convener of this collective impact approach in partnership with several key stakeholders – Georgia Family Connection Partnership and Georgia State University School of Social Work’s Child Welfare Training Collaborative. In addition, an Advisory Council was assembled in early 2018 to provide guidance and support throughout the implementation of State of Hope. The Council is made up of leaders representing over 40 organizations.

Why Hope?

State of Hope was officially launched in May of 2017 at a special event held in Atlanta. Check out the video from that event [here](#).

Do you care about your community, do you believe that you can make a difference? Do you want to see families thrive and children succeed? Then we invite you to be part of a movement to bring Hope across the state. We hope you will apply and be a hope-giver in your community.

WHY APPLY?

It's time to radically improve the lives of children and families in Georgia. We're starting by connecting creative thinkers and doers, like you. Together, we will do more for our communities than we could on our own.

All applicants who are invited to join the State of Hope become part of the Hope Ecosystem, where we connect, learn, and collaborate to create family-centered support systems.

Local communities are the real and lasting support systems that all children and families need. Join us as we build the nation's first State of Hope.

IMPACT OF HOPE

Download a document describing the impact of hope here:



The Case for Hope

BUSINESS CASE

HOPE is more than a way of being. It's a way of doing. HOPE is needed in every community in Georgia because families deserve to be safe and supported in their neighborhoods, having resources that are designed with their input. Creating a State of Hope in Georgia has the opportunity to put the human back into human services and activate the power of the community to do good and take care of its members. It is knitted together by a network of partners working together to create a better quality of life for children and families in Georgia and informed by the collective wisdom of communities.

State of Hope (SOH) is a collaborative approach in which people from all walks of life share a vision of safety and success for every child, family and individual who lives in their community. It is also a place where public and private organizations – nonprofits, philanthropies, government, businesses and communities – collaborate closely to help achieve that vision. As a result, children are safer, families are stronger and communities are more supportive places for all of its members to thrive. Making Georgia a place where HOPE lives can make communities stronger and more nurturing but also creates a ripple effect for those who need it the most.

Find out the full story!



[Download the full Business Case in PDF here.](#)



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Designing for Hope

WHAT IS HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN?

Human-centered design is a creative approach to problem solving that involves keeping the people you are designing for at the center of the process and tailoring solutions that meet their unique needs.

WHY THIS APPROACH?

Georgia has long struggled to create support systems that are sufficient to address the needs of all children and families in crisis.

Human-centered design is a proven process for developing innovative solutions by collaboratively coming up with ideas that are desirable to families and children, viable to build, and feasible to execute.

The State of Hope Human-Centered Design Process:

*Designing with,
not for...*

*The State of
Hope's human-
centered design
process*

DISCOVER

In this phase, designers engage with the people they are designing for to empathize with them and understand firsthand the problems that need to be solved.

DESIGN

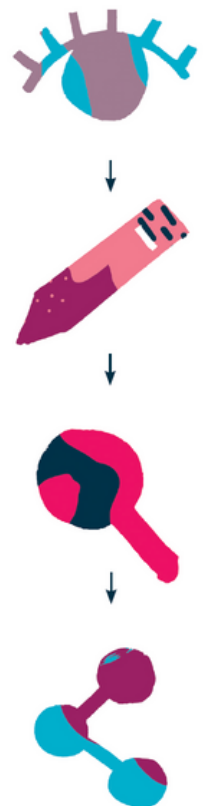
Inspired by the needs uncovered during the discovery phase, the design phase is all about coming up with ideas and building prototypes to learn from in the community.

ASSESS

In this phase, designers implement their prototypes and get feedback from the people they are designing for.

SHARE

The final step is to reflect on the process, identify learnings, and share the story with the broader State of Hope ecosystem and beyond.



Check it out!



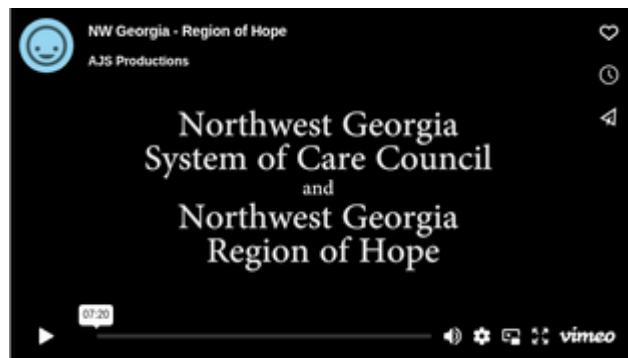
Shining the Light on Hope

Restoration Rome



Check out examples of Hope in Action across the state!

Northwest Georgia
Region of Hope



Beechland Place



Southwire – 12 for Life



Chatham County Safety
Net Planning Council, Inc.



Hope Connections

Here are some resources you can use –
whether you apply or not!

Georgia Regional Map

Find out what region you are in at: dfcs.georgia.gov/locations/regional-map

Georgia's Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Plan

The new plan in 2020 aims to prevent child abuse and neglect. The plan now reflects a more equitable approach than it did previously. When we come together with a common cause, we can make important conditions a reality. The following overarching goals reflect the results of our collective action regarding Georgia's families, systems/governments, and society must achieve in the next 10 years (2020–2029).

Learn more at: [CANPP - PCA Georgia \(gsu.edu\)](https://canpp-pca.gsu.edu).

Download Georgia's Prevention Plan, [A Vision for Child & Family Well-being in Georgia](#).

Inclusiv Conversations formerly Civic Dinners

Supported by the Division of Family and Children Services' Office of Prevention, these civic dinners are a great way to meet community members and discuss your big idea. You can host a dinner or attend one. These conversations are on preventing child abuse and neglect and is a place to learn, share ideas and find your role in supporting Georgia's children and families. For more information about how to host an Inclusiv conversation or participate in one, visit inclusiv.co/ga-family-wellbeing.

Community Action Agencies

In Georgia, there are 20 Community Action Agencies that are leading the cause in providing opportunities and empowerment tools to strengthen low income families. Our goal is simple...we will continue to fight poverty and empower Georgians until every low-income family in the state of Georgia is self-sufficient. Learn more here:

www.georgiacaa.org

Georgia Family Connection Partnership

Georgia Family Connection is the only statewide network in the country dedicated to the health and well-being of families and communities. They strive to empower communities in 159 counties to craft local solutions based on local decisions. You can find more information at gafcp.org.



Hope Connections

Child Welfare Training Collaborative (CWTC)

The Georgia State University Andrew Young School of Policy Studies School of Social Work Professional Excellence Program Child Welfare Training Collaborative offers training to community partners (e.g. DFCS, law enforcement, placement providers, early care, education, behavioral health, juvenile courts, pediatric health providers, Court Appointed Special Advocates) and other community and government organizations throughout the state of Georgia. CWTC provides shared training opportunities on issues facing children and families involved in the child welfare system and promotes collaboration among community partners to support better outcomes for Georgia's children. The current training offerings include complex trauma and its impact on brain development and building resilience.

To view the training calendar and additional resources, visit cwtc.gsu.edu.

Resilient GEORGIA

www.resilientga.org

Leads a state-wide coalition to develop a closely-aligned and trauma-informed public and private network working toward a united vision to create a birth through the 26-year-old integrated behavioral health system. Key components to be implemented by our partners include prevention, early intervention, research, advocacy and policy, and System of Care implementation and coordination.

Prevention and Community Support Section

dfcs.georgia.gov/prevention-and-community-support-section

The Prevention and Community Support (PCS) Section works within the Division and in partnership with community-based organizations to reduce child abuse and neglect. Through the use of state and federal funding streams, PCS supports the use of evidence-based and evidence-informed practices and programs to improve outcomes for children and families. In an effort to assist the Division in providing Georgia with safe children, strengthened families, and stronger communities, PCS-funded services include parent education, linkage to resources, training, high-quality home visitation, assessment and screening, adolescent pregnancy prevention, youth development and professional development for our providers.

(continued on next page)



Hope Connections

The following programs comprise PCS:

- Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention
- Promoting Safe and Stable Families
- Personal Responsibility Education Program
- Title V State Sexual Risk Avoidance Education

PCS's Funding Opportunities Webpage: dfcs.georgia.gov/funding-opportunity.

Follow PCS on Social Media: [Facebook](#) • [Twitter](#) • [Instagram](#)

Personal Responsibility Education Program

dfcs.georgia.gov/services/prevention-and-community-support-section/personal-responsibility-and-education-program

The State Personal Responsibility Education (PREP) Program's purpose is to educate youth through evidence-based programs to reduce teenage pregnancy, STDs including HIV/AIDS, and STI's among high risk youth. PREP targets youth ages 10-19 who are in foster care, live in geographic areas with high teen birth rates, or come from racial or ethnic minority groups. Through a competitive funding solicitation, GA-PREP awards grants to public and private agencies for the purpose of educating youth ages 10-19 and up to 21 if pregnant or parenting. GA-PREP serves the larger goals of GA's DHS by providing high risk youth free access to evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs and supplemental adult preparation subjects.

GA-PREP is also hosts a series of 2-day training designed to help adults become a "Connected Caregiver." These trainings have been designed specifically for foster parents, CCI and CPA caregivers, case managers, and supervisors. Through funding from the DHS/DFCS PREP program, these trainings are being offered for FREE to the first 50 registrants. For more information regarding future trainings, please visit GA-PREP's website.

Title V State Sexual Risk Avoidance Education Grant Program

dfcs.georgia.gov/abstinence-education-program

Georgia's Sexual Risk Avoidance Education Grant Program awards contract to public and nonprofit agencies to provide abstinence education within a positive youth development framework. Title V State Abstinence Education Grant Program's goals are to reduce adolescent sexual activity, pregnancies, births, repeat births, and sexually transmitted diseases & infections; and increase the use of abstinence education as the best health message for adolescents by initiating after-school, school-based, or community-based positive youth development programs.

Hope Connections

Georgia Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

www.acesconnection.com/g/georgia-aces-connection

ACEs are adverse childhood experiences that harm children's developing brains and lead to changing how they respond to stress and damaging their immune systems so profoundly that the effects show up decades later. ACEs Connection is an action-based social network for individuals, sectors, and communities that are utilizing the ACEs science to implement trauma-informed and resilience-building practices and policies. The Georgia ACEs Connection community is a group of professionals, providers, and concerned citizens sharing relevant information about this critical topic. Developed by the Georgia Essentials for Childhood State Steering Committee, this group hopes to be able to make connections and enhance communication among those with an interest in the field.

Prevent Child Abuse Georgia Resource Map

abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/map

This online tool is meant to assist families with questions about parenting, childcare, legal aid referrals, grandparents raising grandchildren, counseling services, and other support in your area.

You can also call the 1-800-CHILDREN Helpline (1-800-244-5373) that will give information you can use wherever you live in Georgia.

Candid Learning

learning.candid.org

All live trainings, on-demand learning resources, and tools that were previously found on GrantSpace will now be a part of Candid Learning. Candid Learning is your new single destination for all of Candid's live and on-demand trainings, webinars, and other resources designed to improve your fundraising, overall sustainability, grantmaking, and transparency. Because Candid has learning tools for grantmakers and grantseekers, the site is designed to be a destination for both audiences, and includes pathways to content from GrantCraft and GlassPockets.

Georgia Housing Search

www.georgiahousingsearch.org

Sponsored by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, GeorgiaHousingSearch.org provides detailed information about rental properties and helps people find housing to best fit their needs. The service can be accessed at no cost online 24 hours a day or through a toll-free, bilingual call center at 1-877-428-8844, available M-F, 9:00 am - 8:00 pm EST.



Hope Connections

Emory Brain Health Center

The Opioid Crisis- This episode documents the roots of the opioid crisis in Georgia and addresses the latest information about the increase in addiction rates and overdose deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic. Watch at: [The Opioid Crisis \(emoryhealthcare.org\)](https://www.emoryhealthcare.org)

Community Engagement Assessment Tool

You can use this tool to help assess and define a community engagement plan.



Georgia Essentials for Childhood Initiative

abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/essentials/

Implementing the Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support Programs

www.nationalfamilysupportnetwork.org/standards-implementation

Promoting Safe and Stable Families

www.pssfnet.com

The Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program provides federal child welfare funding, training and technical assistance to help build state and community capacity to meet the needs of families at risk of child welfare intervention and families in crisis. Families at greatest risk of entering Georgia's child protection system often have complex and interrelated problems such as poverty, unemployment, domestic violence, substance abuse and teen pregnancy which increase family stressors, impair family functioning and place children in situations where they may be unsafe. Children have the greatest chance for a safe and stable home environment when their parents and caregivers are knowledgeable of and have access to essential supports and services in their own communities. The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services issues an annual funding opportunity for family-serving, non-profit agencies and public entities through its Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program. PSSF provides funding for community-based services to children and families who may be at risk for child abuse and neglect or have had confirmed reports of child abuse and neglect and are involved with the state's child welfare agency.

NAMI Georgia

www.namiga.org

NAMI Georgia is an organization of families, friends and individuals whose lives have been affected by mental illness. Together, we advocate for better lives for those individuals who have a mental illness, and we offer support, education and advocacy as we do so.

Mental Health America of Georgia

www.mhageorgia.org



Hope Connections

National Family Support Network

www.nationalfamilysupportnetwork.org

State Child Abuse Prevention Plan Information and Updates

abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/canpp

State Child Abuse Prevention Campaign microsite, with resources

www.belongingforhope.org

Strengthening Families Georgia

strengtheningfamiliesga.net

Substance Abuse Resources

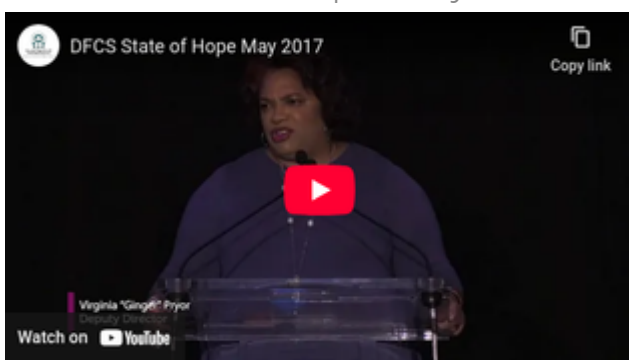
www.justice.gov/file/990501/download



Communicating Hope

Here are some materials to help you talk about hope in your community!

DFCS State of Hope May 2017



Our Journey
Towards the State of Hope



Georgia DFCS Host
Destination Hope in Macon



State of Hope Talking Points



State of Hope PowerPoint

Data

Here are some data resources that may help highlight needs and issues in your community. These are useful whether you apply or not.

KIDS COUNT

KIDS COUNT is a state and national effort to track the well-being of children. Access this data at gafcp.org/kids-count. See also [52 Indicators of Child Well-Being](#). For more information, contact Rebecca Rice at rebecca@gafcp.org.

Georgia Family Connection Partnership

Search GaFCP's [Collaborative Finder](#) by typing in a first name, last name, county, city, or region, or you can search for your desired county using a map.

United Way – Child Well-Being Index

[The Child Well-Being Index](#) was developed in partnership with stakeholders who care about the future of our region to measure child well-being across Greater Atlanta. It is offered in partnership with Neighborhood Nexus and Atlanta Regional Commission.

Additional Data

The Department of Public Health, Office of Health Indicators for Planning (OHIP)

oasis.state.ga.us

Get Georgia Reading Campaign

getgeorgiareading.org

Department of Community Affairs

georgia-dca.maps.arcgis.com

Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA)

gosa.georgia.gov

Georgia's Cross Agency Child Data System (CACDS)

gacacds.com

Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS)

geears.org/research/readiness_radar

Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPEE)

www.gpee.org

Application Process

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Early adversity in life has lasting impacts, with effects stretching from childhood and adolescence into adulthood. Child abuse and neglect are preventable! Georgia believes that a state prevention plan will surface effective approaches to increasing safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments for all children and families. For a goal as complex as the prevention of child abuse, a well-planned broad-based strategy is essential.

In March 2020, Georgia released its State Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Plan that will be effective from 2020 – 2029. Georgia’s Prevention Plan was developed from the consideration of feedback received from two statewide surveys and 25 planning sessions across the 14 DFCS regions — 14 sessions with service providers and professionals, and 11 sessions with parents, caregivers, local leaders (government, civic/community, faith, and business), and community members.

Over the next decade, six objectives were identified in this plan as community conditions that must change in order for collective action to work and achieve Georgia’s vision for prevention.

Plan objectives are intended to help child and family service providers, community members, families, and businesses create and sustain nurturing environments for healthy families.

GEORGIA'S OBJECTIVES FOR PREVENTION

1. Increase family economic stability
2. Increase family resiliency
3. Increase access to early childhood education
4. Increase family mental health
5. Increase family physical health
6. Increase community knowledge and awareness of the societal factors that contribute to child abuse and neglect and the capacity to prevent it.

Within the four Opportunities of Hope, SOH is placing emphasis on supporting Big Ideas that address Georgia’s Six Objectives for Prevention.

You can learn more about this plan by reviewing [Georgia’s Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Plan \(GCANPP\)](#) located in the Hope Connections Section.



Application Process

HIGH-LEVER APPLICATION SELECTION PROCESS

LAUNCH DAY	State of Hope Tool Kit (“Hope Kit”) distribution launches the application process
APPLICATION PERIOD	Innovators submit their stories (application) via email
INITIAL REVIEW	Community Review Teams are assembled & engaged to select and prioritize local ideas/projects
FINAL REVIEW/ SELECTION	State level team will make final selections
ANNOUNCEMENT	Selection announcements and communication to all applicants
GRANTEES MEETING	Meet with selected State of Hope sites to move projects forward

INSTRUCTIONS ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR APPLICANTS

Since one of the key tenets of State of Hope is to consider the **Human-Centered Design Process** and design something that the community wants (with them, not for them, without their input), we are asking applicants – before they submit an application – to attend at least one community gathering to get feedback on their big idea. We will ask them in the application what they learned.

#Gotowherethepeopleare – Here are just a few suggested community meetings/gathering types where innovators can gather input on their ideas and information on community needs:

- Family Connection Collaborative Meeting
- Civic Dinners
- Church Events
- Sporting Events
- Public Forums
- Town Hall Meetings
- Surveys and Focus Groups
- Festivals

**Due to the current conditions of COVID-19 both virtual and face-to-face events are accepted. For the protection of yourself and those in your community please remember to adhere to your local public health and CDC recommendations and guidelines when planning or attending a community event in fulfillment of this section.*

Application Process



THE HOPE ECO-SYSTEM

All State of Hope Applicants will be invited to connect to a larger “Hope Ecosystem”. This will be a network where sites will be able to enhance collaboration, partake in learning opportunities, and access additional resources (grant opportunities, trainings, access to partners, etc.).

STATE OF HOPE ECOSYSTEM SITE CATEGORIES

STATE OF HOPE FUNDED SITES

What will the State of Hope Sites receive?

- Seeds of HOPE - Formal funding/grant award
- Trauma training for the community
- Capacity-building around the design thinking process for project implementation
- Additional specialized technical assistance as needed
- Specialized training
- Access to additional grant and funding opportunities

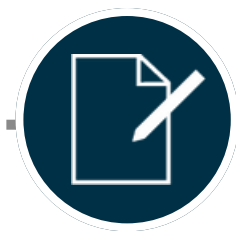
***Funded sites can be awarded small seeds of Hope from the range of: \$5,000 to \$10,000**

STATE OF HOPE ECOSYSTEM SITES – NON-FUNDED

What will Non-Funded State of Hope Sites receive?

- Non-funded Ecosystem Sites will receive access to all SOH Funded site opportunities EXCEPT formal funding. Non-funded sites can re-apply for the opportunity to receive funding during the next open round of SOH applications.

Apply
Now!



FAQs

Question: What is the State of Hope?

The State of Hope is an initiative that seeks to activate community nonprofits, including philanthropies, government, businesses and the community members to collaborate closely to build local safety nets that will prevent conditions that contribute to disparities in education, threaten a family's self-sufficiency and/or could lead to child abuse and neglect. Although this is not a foster care initiative, ultimately through State of Hope we desire to activate communities around prevention efforts to keep children from entering the foster care system in the first place. We want to support big ideas in local communities that will do just that.

Question: What are the focus areas for this opportunity? What types of big ideas are you looking for?

The Division has four Opportunities for Hope for this initiative. These are the priority areas that we believe will have the greatest impact on keeping children safe, strengthening families and empowering communities. We want applications for State of Hope projects that are focused on one or more of these opportunity areas.

- **Education** – improving the educational attainment of vulnerable youth, most importantly the graduation rates of youth in foster care
- **Trauma-Awareness** – increasing the awareness of trauma informed practices, the impact of trauma and how to mitigate its impact
- **Quality Caregiving** – improving the quality of caregiving across a continuum including, but not limited to, birth parents, kin caregivers, foster/adoptive parents and the larger caregiver community
- **Economic Self-sufficiency** – strengthening and supporting individuals and families on their path toward independence

Funding for Big Ideas will be prioritized for projects that promote one or more of the six Georgia Objectives for Prevention. Those objectives are to increase economic stability, family resiliency, mental and physical health for families, access to early childhood education, and increasing knowledge of the prevention of child abuse/neglect.

Question: Who can participate and/or apply?

Any community member 13 years of age and older can apply and submit their big idea(s). Organizations (non-profits, business, etc.) are also eligible to apply.

Question: How can I apply?

Applications should be completed and submitted [here](#).



FAQs

Question: How will applications be reviewed?

All applications submitted will be first reviewed by teams of community members who will review applications from the geographic areas where they live. Once the community teams review the applications they will send their recommendations to a state-level team that will make the final decisions based on those recommendations. Announcements of final decisions will be made at the end of February 2026.

Question: What will happen if I am selected to become a State of Hope site?

There are several selection categories for the State of Hope. All applicants will be selected for one of the two categories:

- State of Hope Sites (technical support without formal funding)
- State of Hope Funded Sites (provided one-time seed funding and technical support)

All applicants will be notified of decisions made by February 2026. Please review the Application Process Section in the Toolkit to learn more about the State of Hope Site Categories.

Question: How much money can I apply for?

We are looking to support a variety of innovative and creative ideas and will provide seed funding for projects anywhere from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Question: Can I apply as a team?

Yes. We encourage teams of community members or partner organizations to apply together. Partnerships allow for a greater chance to have more impact in your community.

Question: Why would I want to apply to be a part of the State of Hope? What makes it different?

The State of Hope is a unique opportunity to make lasting change within your local community in a new way. What separates the State of Hope from other collaborative initiatives is the use of human-centered design thinking and having the voices of youth and communities at the center of the design process. Selected State of Hope sites will be able to take the ideas that have been designed by youth and community members in order to inform the strategies they choose to implement through their projects (the design-within-a-design concept). Human-centered design is a creative approach to problem solving which involves keeping the people you are designing for at the center of the process and tailoring solutions that meet their unique needs. To learn more about design thinking click [here](#).

If you submit an application and are not selected to receive funding you will still be invited to be a part of our Hope Ecosystem, a network where all selected State of Hope sites will be able to connect and network with fellow sites, receive specialized training, and access additional grant and funding opportunities.



FAQs

Question: If I have additional questions that aren't answered here, who should I contact?

Please email StateofHope@dhs.ga.gov if you have additional questions that are not answered here. A member of our team will reach out to answer your question.

Question: Who might I connect with locally to discuss my Big Idea?

The local Family Connection is an established group in every county in Georgia that is focused on child and family well-being. They can provide data, connect you to other potential partners, and share with you the work they are already doing.

[Collaborative Finder](#)

For additional questions or to be added to the State of Hope email distribution list, please email StateofHope@dhs.ga.gov.



Acknowledgements

HOPE is more than a way of being. It's a way of doing for our community. Thanks to all those who help HOPE thrive by showing up – where people live and work, where they learn and go to have fun. These simple actions you take day after day make our community stronger and more nurturing – where all children grow up safe, where people find jobs they want, where everyone belongs. This is creating a ripple effect for those who need it most – together we are making waves.

Thanks to the State of Hope Core Team who made it possible:

Division of Family and Children Services:

LaMarva Ivory – Deputy Commissioner of External Affairs

NuTrelle Toodle – Project Director, State of Hope

Salena Perry – Director of Community Partnerships

Glenene W. Lanier – Interim Director, Prevention and Community Support Section

Arlymah Gray – Director of Federal Plans

Georgia Professional Human Service Association (GPHSA):

Susan Boatwright – Executive Director

Georgia Family Connection Partnership:

Sherry Witherington – Director of Community Support

Rebekah Hudgins – Research and Evaluation Consultant

Steve Erickson – Research and Accountability Team Leader

Sunny Rogers – Community Support Specialist

Georgia State University Andrew Young School of Policy Studies School of Social Work Professional Excellence Program:

Deidre Carmichael – Deputy Program Director

Amy Mobley – Project Manager

Pat Strawser – Instructional Designer

Thanks to the State of Hope Design Team who helped to shape what could be possible.

Thanks to the State of Hope Advisory Council who provided guidance and feedback every step of the way. **Click here for a list of the [advisory council partner organizations](#).**

Together we can spread HOPE Across Georgia!

