

In Georgia, public housing and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) preference categories are structured by the **Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)** and individual **Local Public Housing Authorities (PHAs)**.  Georgia Department of ... +1

Because DCA manages the voucher program for **149 out of Georgia's 159 counties**, their criteria serve as the primary statewide standard, though urban hubs like Atlanta or Augusta establish localized rules.  Georgia Department of ... +1

The standard housing preference categories used across Georgia prioritize applicants through the following criteria:

1. Residency and Employment Preference (Primary State Preference)

The Georgia DCA applies its primary preference to applicants who directly impact the local economy or community infrastructure. You qualify if the head of household, spouse, or co-head meets any of the following criteria:  Georgia.gov

- **Live** in a county included on the specific waiting list you applied to.
- **Work** within one of the counties on that waiting list.
- **Hold a verified job offer** confirming they are hired to work in a county on that waiting list.  Georgia.gov

2. At-Risk and Vulnerable Populations

The [Georgia Department of Community Affairs \(DCA\)](#) flags specific populations as "at risk of housing instability". Local housing programs elevate applicants who are:  Georgia Department of Co...

- **Experiencing literal homelessness** or living in a temporary hotel/motel paid for by the family.
- **Residing in institutional settings**, including group homes, mental health facilities, or transitioning out of foster care.
- **Experiencing severe cost burden**, meaning they pay a devastating portion of their income toward rent.  Georgia Department of Co...

3. Local Housing Authority Variations

The remaining 10 Georgia counties not fully under the DCA (such as Fulton, Richmond, and Chatham) run their own local public housing authorities. They often layer additional local preferences:  Georgia Department of ... +1

- **The [Atlanta Housing Authority \(AH\)](#)**: Prioritizes senior high-rise communities for heads of household who are **elderly (62+)** or **non-elderly disabled adults**. They also enforce a strict **Work/Program Participation Requirement** for non-exempt adults.
- **Veterans Preferences**: Most local Georgia PHAs give point boosts to active-duty military, veterans, and surviving spouses.  Atlanta Housing +1

How Preferences Affect the Selection Process

Georgia utilizes a **randomized lottery system** to manage open waiting lists. Once an open application period closes, a computer lottery system randomly assigns applicants a placement number. However, **verified preference selections are applied to rank those lottery numbers**, meaning an applicant with a local residency/work preference moves to the top of the pull list ahead of non-residents.  Georgia.gov +1