

# Unhoused in Georgia: The intersection of housing and the child welfare system

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# **School Justice Initiatives**

- **School Justice Partnerships and School Climate and Student Attendance Committees**
- **School Based Behavioral Health Advocacy**
- **School Discipline: FAIR project**
  - **Georgia Appleseed works with partners to provide support and representation to foster children facing expulsion**
  - **Directly refer foster youth at [gaappleseed.org](http://gaappleseed.org) and filling out the referral form**
  - **Check out our guides on how to advocate for kids facing school suspension or expulsion**

# Housing Justice Initiatives

- All Georgia's children should have access to decent, stable housing.
- The metrics:
  - Clayton County Emergency Rental Assistance Analysis
    - Over 60% of applicants were single women with at least one school aged child.
  - Removal to foster care due to inadequate housing in Georgia: 20%\*
  - School Mobility Rates

\*Fostering Court Improvement. Data reported between Oct 2021-Sept. 2022



Figure 1: Frequency of District Student Mobility Rates, 2020 and 2021

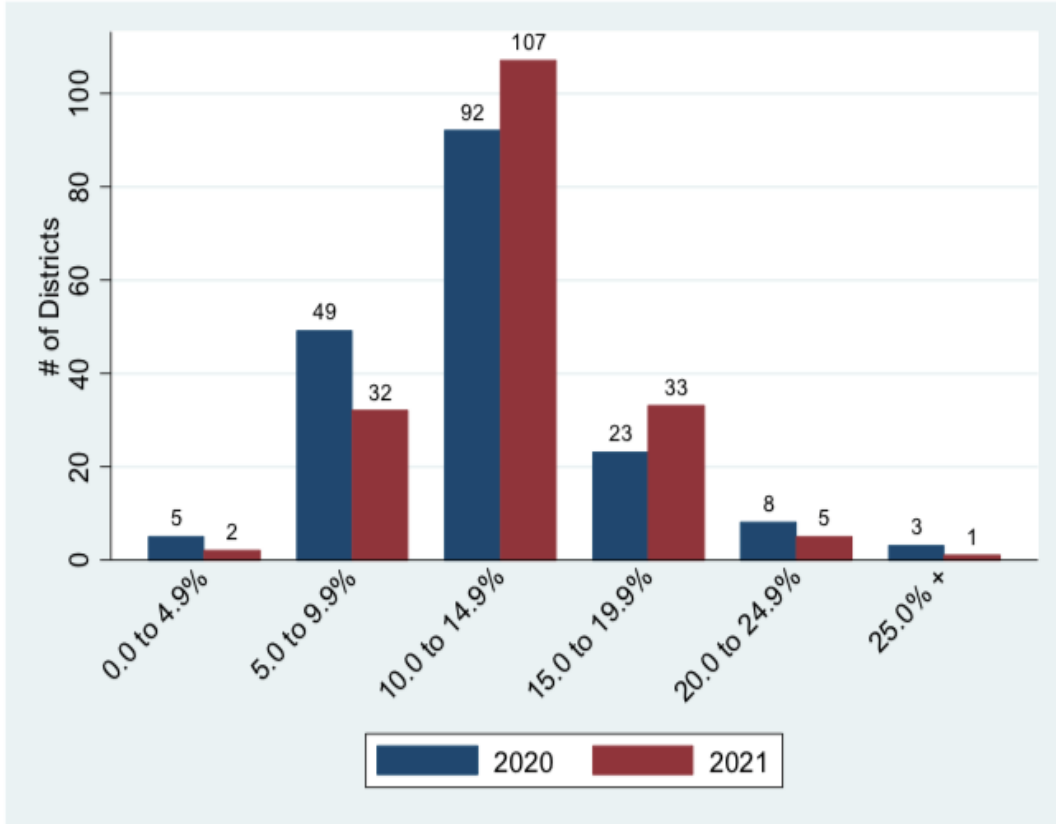


Table 2: Districts with Highest and Lowest 2021 Student Mobility Rates

Five Highest Districts	Mobility Rate	Five Lowest Districts	Mobility Rate
Mitchell County	54.8%	Bremen City	4.7%
Baker County	22.1%	Chickamauga City	4.7%
Valdosta City	21.7%	City Schools of Decatur	5.0%
Liberty County	21.3%	Clay County	5.0%
Richmond County	21.0%	Trion City	5.1%

The four districts with the highest student mobility rates are all located in southern region of the state. Figure 2 below shows a map of 2021 district student mobility rates. The districts with the highest mobility rates listed in Table 2 all have majority Black student populations.<sup>2</sup> Four of these districts also have student populations that are majority Directly Certified (DC) students (Liberty County has a DC rate of 38.5%).<sup>3</sup>

Conversely, four of the districts with the lowest mobility have majority White student populations and DC rates of 23.8% or lower. Clay County has a DC rate of 84.1% and a student population that is 97% Black, making it an outlier from the other districts with the lowest mobility rates.

<sup>2</sup> The 2020-2021 “Enrollment by Subgroup Programs” dataset was used for demographic analysis. This dataset is available from GOSA’s [Downloadable Data webpage](#) and includes Full-time-equivalency (FTE) enrollment counts for school systems and schools disaggregated by subgroups.

<sup>3</sup> Direct Certification (DC) is the method that GOSA uses to measure student poverty. The district-level and school-level DC rates for 2020-2021 are available on GOSA’s [Downloadable Data webpage](#). A definition for DC students and more information is available on GOSA’s [Direct Certification webpage](#).



# What is Inadequate Housing?

- HUD defines homeless “A family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” or “a nighttime residence not meant for human habitation”
- The Georgia Department of Education (DOE) defines homelessness and housing instability much more broadly\*:
  - “Doubling up”
  - Unsheltered
  - Hotels/Motels
  - Other forms of unstable housing: Shelters/transitional housing

\*GA DOE McKinney-Vento report 2020-2021. During this reporting period 31,088 school-aged children received supports including, but not limited to transportation, school supplies, and clothing.

# Family Foundations: Safe, Stable Housing

- Homelessness is associated with inability to meet basic needs, extreme poverty, increased substance use disorders, mental health struggles, and increased rates of parental emotional distress. \*
- Children living in unsafe, unstable homes can suffer long-term implications to their health, wellbeing, education and employment prospects.
- Homelessness and housing instability can delay reunification, forcing children to remain in care for longer periods of time.
- A national study found that 1 in 6 families needed housing support when they first involved with protective services, while 2 in 5 families needed housing assistance AFTER their child was placed into foster care. \*\*

\*Hong, S., & Piescher, K. (2012). The role of supportive housing in homeless children's well-being: An investigation of child welfare and educational outcomes. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34, 1140-1447.

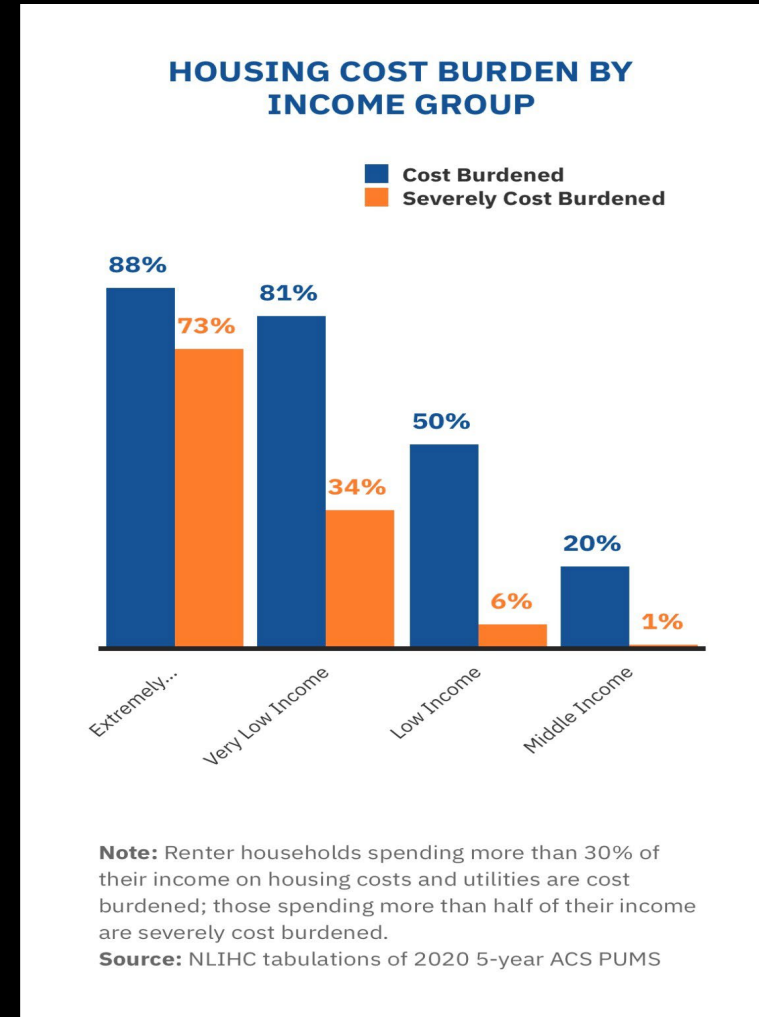
\*\*Fowler, P., Henry, J., Schoeny, D., Landsverk, B., Chavira, M., & Taylor, J. (2013). Inadequate housing among families under investigation for child abuse and neglect: Prevalence from a national probability sample. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 52(1), 106-114.



# Barriers to Stable Housing

- Shortage of Affordable Units
  - 207,244-shortage of rental homes affordable and available for extremely low-income renters
- Average cost of rent across GA
  - A person would have to work 116 hours a week to afford a modest two-bedroom rental. \*
  - My zip code- \$30.58
  - Albany, GA (31707)-\$18.65

\*2022 Out of Reach-National Law Income Housing Coalition.  
Nlihc.org



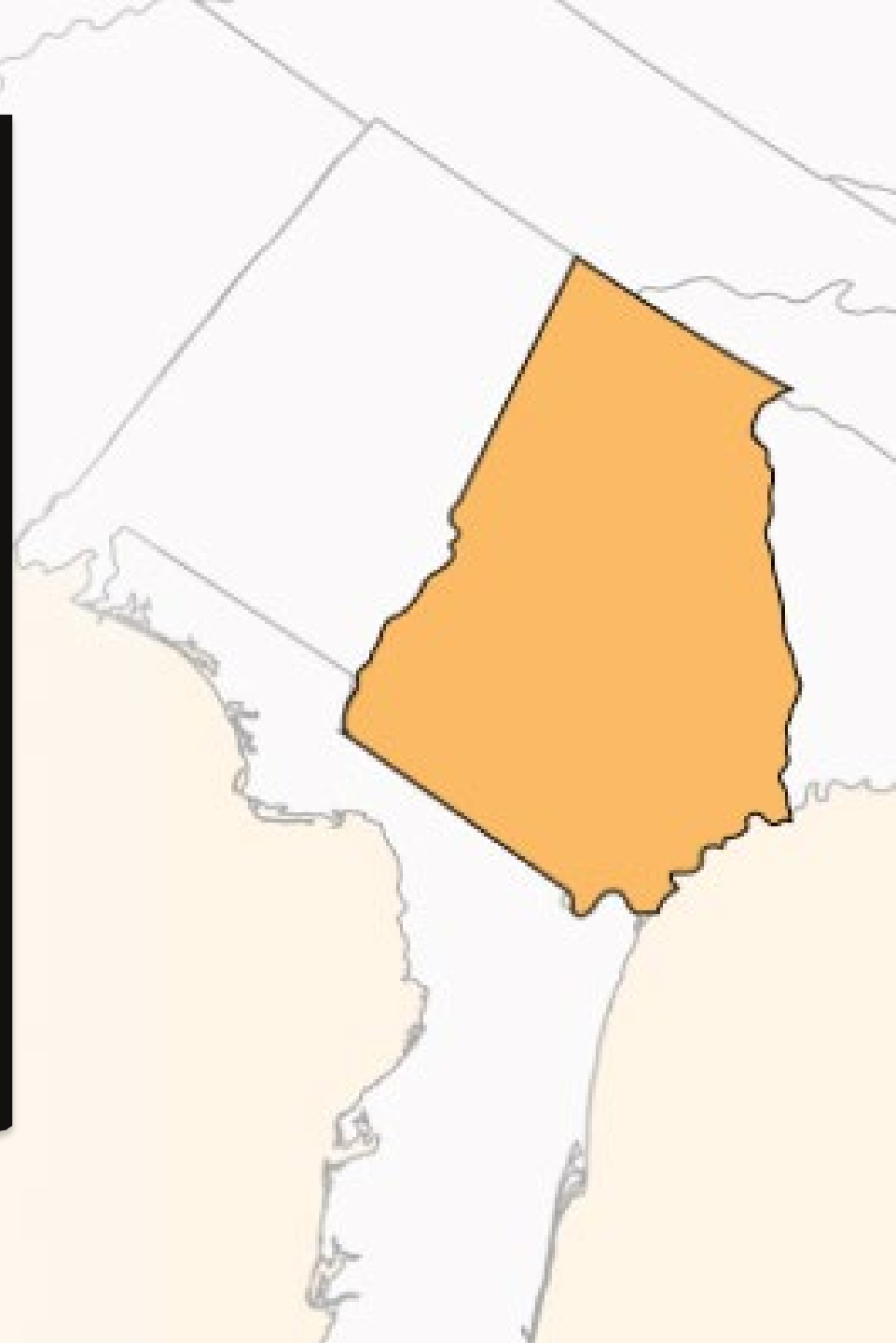
# More Barriers to Stable Housing.....

- Subsidized Housing
  - DCA administers Housing Choice Vouchers (Formerly Section 8) for 149 of Georgia's 159 counties.
  - Waiting lists to obtain a housing choice voucher can be years long and once a person obtains a voucher, they frequently struggle to find a landlord to accept the voucher.
    - \$850.00-Two bedroom in Troup County (\$1200 on Apartment Finder)
    - \$919.00-Two bedroom in Clarke County (\$1600 on Apartment Finder)
  - No "source of income" discrimination protections in Georgia
  - [Georgiahousingsearch.org](http://Georgiahousingsearch.org): Clearinghouse of landlords that accept housing choice vouchers.
- Upfront fees to secure housing-Application fees AND administration fees
- Credit scores



# Weak Tenant Protection Laws

- Fast, Cheap eviction process
- No Right to Cure
- Very few ways to address substandard housing conditions.
- No warranty of habitability
- Repair and Deduct
- 2019-Landlord Retaliation law
  - Roadblocks to effective application
    - Wait out the protected period
    - Non-renewal
    - Access to counsel



# Accessing Support: Coordinated Entry Systems

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- Georgia Department of Community Affairs
  - 1-844-249-8367-Get connected to funded agencies in your area.
- Housing First Model does not require a person facing homelessness to address their behavioral health problems or graduate through a series of services before the access stable housing.
  - Rapid Rehousing
  - Supportive Housing
- VI-SPADT
- In the absence of a local coordinated entry system, connect with the United Way or your local homeless coalition

