

Regional Commissions

What are they and what is their purpose?

Statutorily Created

O.C.G.A. § 50-8-32

Regional commissions are created and established as public agencies and instrumentalities of their members that shall facilitate coordinated and comprehensive planning in conformity with minimum standards and procedures established pursuant to law. Regional commissions shall function as the regional planning entity for land use, environmental, transportation, and historic preservation planning in each designated region of the state.



Membership

Each municipality and county in the state is automatically a member of the regional commission for the region which includes the municipality or county. No county can be divided between regions.



Annual Dues

Each regional commission receives member dues based on jurisdiction population. The amount per person is decided by each regional commission individually.



State Funds

Regional commissions receive pass through funding from the following agencies based on an intrastate funding formula (based on FY 2020):
Department of Community Affairs (DCA): **\$1,810,813**
Department of Human Services (DHS): **\$31,200,468**
Department of Natural Resources (DNR): **\$17,999**



Councils

The council of each regional commission work to establish policy and direction for the regional commission and shall perform such other functions as needed by the region. Specifics on council membership, voting and powers can be found in O.C.G.A. § 50-8-34.

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IN GEORGIA

Georgia's regional commissions work to provide resources that many local governments would not have otherwise, along with help in complying with state and federal laws. In doing so, each commission must submit annual financial audits to DCA and DHS and comply with performance audits done by the state auditor. Performance audit reports can be found [HERE](#).



Regional commissions provide direct lines of communication between Georgia's 689 local governments and state and federal agencies.



Each regional commission focuses on planning, economic development, transportation, information technology, and human services in their respective regions. Additional services, such as grant research, grant writing, loan applications, and historic preservation efforts vary depending on the specific needs of each region. For example, approximately 300 grant applications were done by regional commissions across Georgia in 2018.



Each commission may participate with local, state, or federal governmental agencies, educational institutions, and public and private organizations in the coordination and implementation of research and development activities. These activities, such as census data research, provide useful for many state entities.

Required Documents:



The 'Georgia Planning Act' requires each municipality to produce a comprehensive plan every 10 years and submit the plan to DCA. Regional commissions assist local governments on a regional basis to develop, promote, and assist in creating this plan. These are large undertakings, and regional commissions are able to ease the burden on local jurisdictions.



Regional commissions work with counties and municipalities to comply with the 'Service Delivery Act', which requires a service delivery strategy to be submitted to DCA every 10 years for each of the 159 counties and the municipalities in those counties. Regional commissions serve as moderators as these strategies are negotiated and submitted.



Most regional commissions serve as Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) for DHS. The AAAs are responsible for administering the requirements of the 'Older Americans Act', which targets efforts to improve the lives of older people in areas of income, housing, health, employment, retirement and community services. The AAAs must request reimbursement funds through DHS based on clients served in each of their programs, such as the Home and Community Based Services Program.

While there are three 'Acts' directly affecting regional commissions, these required documents are extensive and apply to all 689 local jurisdictions in each of the 159 counties in Georgia. Without the regional commissions to assist local governments, the state would not have the resources to help each jurisdiction comply with state law.

Georgia's Regions

[Northwest Georgia](#)
[Georgia Mountains](#)
[Atlanta Regional Commission](#)
[Three Rivers](#)
[Northeast Georgia](#)
[Middle Georgia](#)
[Central Savannah River Area](#)
[River Valley](#)
[Heart of Georgia Altamaha](#)
[Southwest Georgia](#)
[Southern Georgia](#)
[Coastal Georgia](#)



SOURCES

<https://www.dca.ga.gov/local-government-assistance/planning/regional-planning/regional-commissions>
<https://aging.georgia.gov/about-us/older-americans-act-oaa>
[Official Code of Georgia Annotated](#)

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