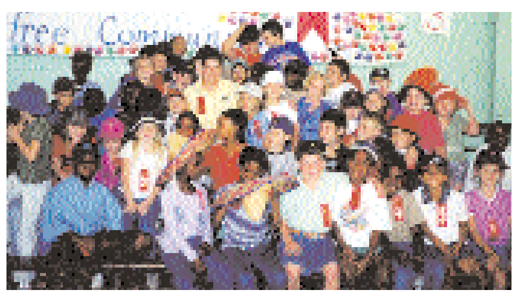
DISMANTLING PERSISTENT POVERTY IN GEORGIA

BREAKING THE CYCLE



The University of Georgia

Carl Vinson Institute of Government

April 2003

On behalf of our entire project team, we are pleased to transmit our Georgia report from the Study on Persistent Poverty in the South. The Southeast Region report was released in December 2002, under the title **It's a Matter of Wealth: Dismantling Persistent Poverty in the Southeastern United States.** *As a follow-up to that publication, this report focuses on specific issues related to the 91-county region of persistent poverty in Georgia and incorporates research commissioned by the Georgia Rural Development Council.*

A sense of urgency for breaking the cycle of persistent poverty in Georgia has become increasingly evident. It is vital to the quality of life for those living in the impoverished region. It is vital to the economic well-being of our entire state. And it is vital to the generations of Georgians yet to come.

A close look at the health of our economy and the human capital throughout the state suggests a distinction between those areas that have been more prosperous and those that continue to struggle. This report proposes specific recommendations for developing a strategy to adjust this imbalance and increase capacity for economic and human capital development within the persistent poverty region.

We would like to extend a warm note of thanks and appreciation to Benjy Griffith for his financial donation and continuing support throughout the study. We are most appreciative of the ground work for this study that was completed for the Southeast Region report by the entire research team and would like to thank those who played a pivotal role in the Georgia analysis: John McKissick, David Lynn, and Mick Ragsdale from the University of Georgia and Matt Bishop from the Georgia Rural Development Council.

We hope that we have contributed to your understanding of the needs of the many impoverished families in our region.

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PERSISTENT POVERTY IN THE SOUTHEAST REGION

It is no secret that the southeastern United States has been plagued by unusually high rates of poverty for many years. The extent of persistent poverty in this region and its impact on education levels, economic conditions, and quality of life have been the subject of many studies and much political debate.

One of the more recent studies, conducted during the 1990s by Ron Wimberley and Libby Morris, defined the region as a crescent-shaped area of 623 counties in 11 southern states where 34% of the nation's poor reside. This region has been commonly referred to as the Black Belt, a term made well known in 1901 by Booker T. Washington to describe the color of the rich southern soil on which slaves worked.[1]

Various federal initiatives have been established to help direct funds into this region for economic and human development. The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) was created in 1965 and over time has shown a positive impact on the region served. Since 2000, the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) has been serving counties in the Mississippi Delta. Beyond these initiatives, however, continuing pockets of poverty exist and signal an unsolved mystery: *Why does this poverty persist and what can be done to break the cycle?*

Senator Zell Miller (D-GA) secured federal funds in fall 2001 to attempt to unravel this puzzle A generous match by Macon businessman Benjy Griffith enabled the University of Georgia to study two issues in the historic cotton-growing area.

Is there a region of persistent poverty in the Southeast composed of rural counties that are not served by other federal commissions or special initiatives?

Is there a need for a federal initiative in the study area and, if so, what is an appropriate structure?

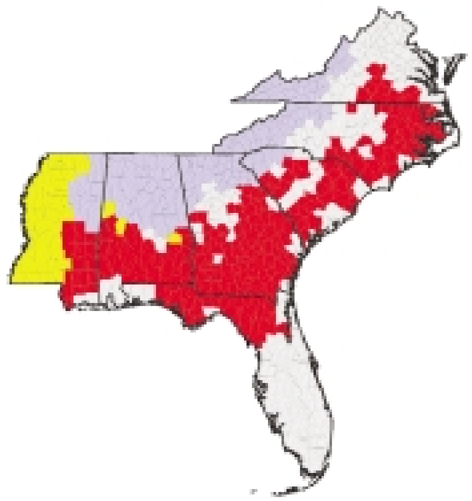


FIGURE 1: PROPOSED REGION OF PERSISTENT POVERTY IN THE SOUTHEAST (PHASE I)

Phase 1 Counties

Mississippi Delta Regional Authority

Appalachian Regional Commission Counties

We published the report of this study in December 2002, under the title *Dismantling Persistent Poverty in the Southeastern United States: It's a Matter of Wealth.* The data clearly showed that "there is indeed a Southeast Region with persistent poverty over three census periods–and it is the poorest of all regions of the country."[2] Encompassing 7.5 million men, women, and children living in 242 counties, the region (see Figure 1) is in dire economic straits and lags behind other regions on a variety of sociodemographic fronts–education, health, employment, and housing.[3]

The report concludes:

> *The economic peril facing the Southeast Region results from, and in turn contributes to, the widespread and persistent nature of the region's poverty. It not only affects those living in the region but also drains the economic health of our entire nation. The basic engine for creating wealth in the region is disadvantaged when compared with other economic regions and the nation as a whole. The economy of the rural South is at risk because it lacks an able workforce and the tools with which to build wealth. This situation will continue to worsen unless and until the region gains the innate ability to produce and sustain wealth through the creation of goods and services in manufacturing, service, and/or agriculture. . . . A federal commission could provide the leadership and coordination to unleash the region's potential and generate long-lasting wealth.*

The State of Georgia lies at the geographic heart of this Southeast Region. A closer look at the state-specific data from the Southeast Region study reveals a unique picture of persistent poverty in our own backyard, a picture that confirms previous research commissioned by the Georgia Rural Development Council.

This report offers an assessment of the challenges of persistent poverty in Georgia and the initiatives that offer glimmers of hope. Strategic recommendations are also proposed for assuring a robust economy and vibrant quality of life for all Georgians.

A SPOTLIGHT ON GEORGIA

RECENT TRENDS DEPICT A GEORGIA WITH MUCH TO CELEBRATE.

We are an increasingly popular place to live. Georgia's population has grown 137% since 1950, and 26% since 1990.[4] At the current rate, our population will exceed 10 million by 2010. About 26% of these residents live in urban areas, a rate that has also been increasing over time.

We are an attractive tourist stop, boasting 45 state parks, 18 historic sites, and many other amenities from the North Georgia mountains to the Georgia coastline.[5]

We are a strong agricultural state, ranking #1 in the nation in production of peanuts, rye, pecans, broilers, and eggs. In 2001, this primary industry accounted for $8.7 billion in total farmgate revenue.[6]

Our economy is diverse, composed of multiple sectors including manufacturing, services, agriculture, retail trade, mining, utilities, and government. With a total economic output of $470 billion in 2000, the top industry employers were services (34.7%), retail trade (18.7%), and manufacturing (15.3%).[7]

We enjoy a large non-profit community. Over 17,000 non-profit organizations, with over $19 billion in annual revenues, are located in Georgia to serve an array of social, human, economic, and cultural needs.[8] They include educational institutions, shelters, hospitals, day care centers, environmental groups, schools, research centers, museums, youth centers, and churches.

We support ongoing workforce development. Nearly half a million Georgians are enrolled in the state's 35 technical colleges and 34 university system schools, helping to produce a skilled and able workforce.[9] Expansion Management Magazine ranked Georgia's industry-specific QuickStart Program the nation's leading workforce training program.

We are a widely recognized transportation hub for the Southeast. The city of Atlanta and the coastal ports, along with a well-developed intrastate transportation system, offer ease of access for shipment of goods and services anywhere in the world.

UNFORTUNATELY, THIS PROSPERITY IS LIMITED.

While some parts of the State have been extraordinarily vibrant, others have lagged behind. Of particular note is metropolitan Atlanta, which has attracted an educated workforce, experienced exponential growth, invested in a world-class airport, and capitalized on a host of other amenities. Analysis of the flow of economic benefits in Georgia indicates that development in rural Georgia adds positively to the economy of metro Atlanta; however, the reverse is typically not the case.

A BACKDROP OF LARGER SOCIETAL SHIFTS PRESENTS ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES.

Globalization of the economy. Goods and services previously concentrated in Georgia are increasingly

The growth of wealth in this major metropolitan area has not "spilled over" into the rest of the state in any significant way. Yet, because a significant portion of metro Atlanta's economy is dependent on a prosperous rural Georgia, the interdependence between these regions is apparent. Perhaps the realization that Atlanta needs rural Georgia and rural Georgia needs Atlanta will facilitate progress in both areas.

being produced and marketed overseas. Decisions once made locally must now consider national and international factors and adjust to their implications.

Changing demographics. Immigration of significant numbers of Hispanics and an increasingly older workforce population contribute to a more diverse, yet a more complex, society.

Technology explosion. The rapid pace of new technological developments continues, changing the flavor of the jobs and the skill set required. With new technology, many occupations, such as farming, now require less physical labor–forcing many to find work in areas where enhanced skills are mandatory.

Pockets of poverty thus remain–and will continue to exist unless appropriate policies and programs are instituted. New, fresh approaches are needed to examine the nature and extent of persistent poverty in Georgia and to generate effective solutions. With this perspective, we used the same definitions and methodology as the study of persistent poverty in the Southeast to identify the counties in Georgia that meet the definition of persistent poverty (Figure 2).

Of the 242 counties in the Southeast Region of persistent poverty, 91 (or 38%) are in Georgia. Eighty-four of the counties are non-metropolitan and commonly characterized as rural.

Nearly one-fourth (or 24%) of the population living in the Southeast Region of persistent poverty reside in Georgia, and slightly more than one-fourth (25%) of the total number of poor people living in this region call Georgia their home. A total of 1.8 million Georgians live in the 91 counties of persistent poverty, or 22% of the state's total population.

Currently, the majority of the population in the 91 persistent poverty counties is White (61.3%). More than one-third (36.1%) is African-American, and another 3.4% is Hispanic American.[10] However, this racial/ethnic composition is shifting rapidly throughout the state. From 1990 to 2000, the Hispanic population in Georgia grew faster than any other racial group. Thirty counties experienced Hispanic growth rates of 500% or more, and 16 of those 30 counties are located within the persistent poverty region. During the same time period, five counties within the persistent poverty region had African-American growth rates greater than the rate for the State as a whole (34.7%). In contrast, 21 counties in the persistent poverty region experienced a decline in the percentage of White residents.[11]

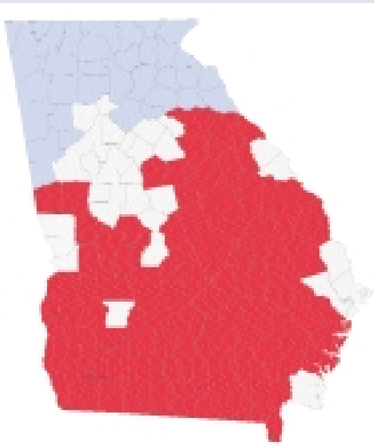


FIGURE 2: PERSISTENT POVERTY COUNTIES IN GEORGIA

Appalachian Regional Commission Counties

Persistent Poverty Counties

Nearly one in three of the 242 counties in the Southeast Region of persistent poverty is in Georgia.

STUDY OF PERSISTENT POVERTY

DEFINITIONS.

Poverty: A single person living alone with an income less than $8,667 in 1999; or a family of four with a 1999 income less than $17,029.[12]

A poor county: A county in which a high percentage of residents (both individuals and/or families) live in poverty.

A county with persistent poverty: A poor county in which a high proportion of its residents remain in poverty over a long period of time, which for our purposes was from 1980 to 2000.

METHODOLOGY.

We identified the poorest counties in the year 2000 and then tried to discern which of them were also severely impoverished in 1980 and/or 1990. We began by using 2000 Census data to calculate the percentage of the population living in poverty in each of the nation's 3,141 counties. Next, we ranked the counties by their levels of poverty, listing them from the highest percent of the population in poverty to the lowest. The ranked list was then divided into four groups of equal size (called quartiles); each group (or quartile) contained roughly 785 counties. The top quartile included the counties with the highest levels of poverty; the second quartile represented the counties with the second highest levels, and so on.

Repeating this process two more times using the 1980 and 1990 Census data, we were able to identify those counties that were in the top two quartiles of poverty across three census periods.[13]

Thus, the region of persistent poverty comprised nonmetropolitan counties that were

- *In the top two quartiles of poverty during 2000 AND during 1980 and/or 1990;*
- *Not part of the Appalachian Regional Commission or Delta Regional Authority; and*
- *Connected to the contiguous set of persistent poverty counties most typical of the historic Black Belt.*

Selected metropolitan counties that we expected to lack some of the same resources as neighboring rural counties were included as well.[14]

THE HUMAN COST OF POVERTY

The toll of persistent poverty in Georgia on human vitality and quality of life cannot be underestimated. The burden falls disproportionately on children and the elderly living in the 91-county region; more than 1 in 4 residents under the age of 18, and nearly 1 in 5 over the age of 65 live in poverty.[15]

A few key indicators show clear evidence of the region's compromised social condition.

Low birth weight. The average rate of low birth weight babies per 1,000 births from 1996 to 1998 was 12% higher in the persistent poverty region than the rate for Georgia (96.5 vs. 86.2).[16]

Education. The percent of persons age 25 and older without a high school diploma in the region (29.5%) is 38% higher than the percent for the state (21.4%).[17]

Adult vitality. Eighty-four of the 91 persistent poverty counties (92%) are classified as average, weak, or distressed by the Georgia Rural Development Council's Human Capital Vitality Index for Adults.[18] None are classified as vibrant, and only 7 counties are classified as strong (Figure 3). Thus, many counties in the region of persistent poverty may be characterized by disproportionately high rates of adult crime, low literacy, poor health status, and high food stamp participation.

Vitality for children and youth. Most (75%) of Georgia's weak or distressed counties as classified on the Georgia Rural Development Council's Human Capital Vitality Index for Youth and Children[19] are located in the persistent poverty region (Figure 4). Thus, many counties in the region of persistent poverty may be characterized by disproportionately high rates of juvenile arrests, high school dropouts, child mortality, and teen pregnancy.

A complete comparison of demographic, social and economic characteristics can be found on page 16.

These data speak to both the current compromised quality of life in the persistent poverty region, as well as the grim prognosis for the next generation.

The vitality of Georgia is sapped by persistent poverty.

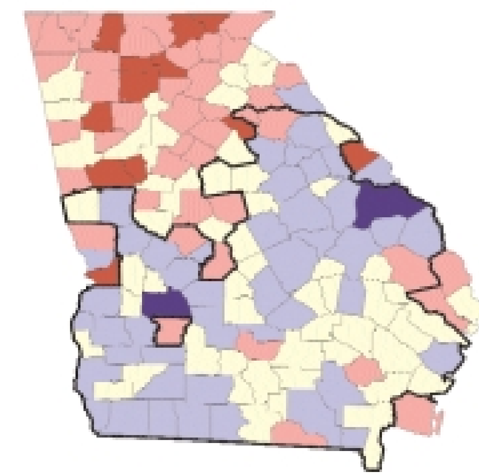


FIGURE 3: HUMAN CAPITAL VITALITY INDEX, RELATIVE COMPOSITE CONDITIONS FOR ADULTS

Vibrant
Strong
Average
Weak
Distressed
Persistent Poverty

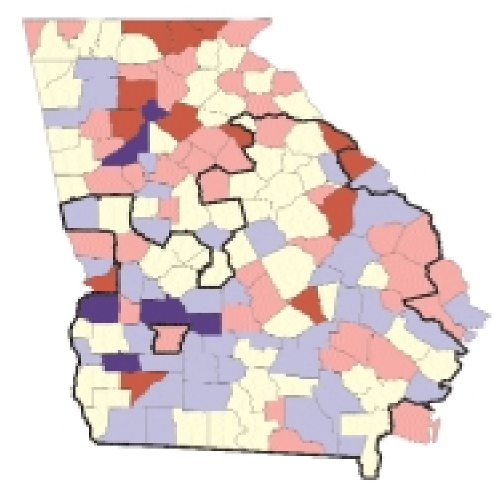


FIGURE 4: HUMAN CAPITAL VITALITY INDEX, RELATIVE COMPOSITE CONDITIONS FOR YOUTH AND CHILDREN

Vibrant
Strong
Average
Weak
Distressed
Persistent Poverty

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT

To better understand the consequences of persistent poverty, we examined the economic structure and competitiveness of Georgia's persistent poverty counties relative to the counties in the state that have not experienced persistent poverty. In comparing the 91-county persistent poverty region (PPR) to counties in the state not marked by persistent poverty (non-PPR), we discovered that the PPR counties

- *Produce less goods and services in total and per person*
- *Have a lower output of goods and services*
- *Are more dependent on low-wage manufacturing than non-PPR counties for economic output and employment*
- *Have less diversity in the types of industry available*
- *Have a low value per acre of agriculture*
- *Are more dependent on government and dividends for household income, while their household income is lower than non-PPR counties.*

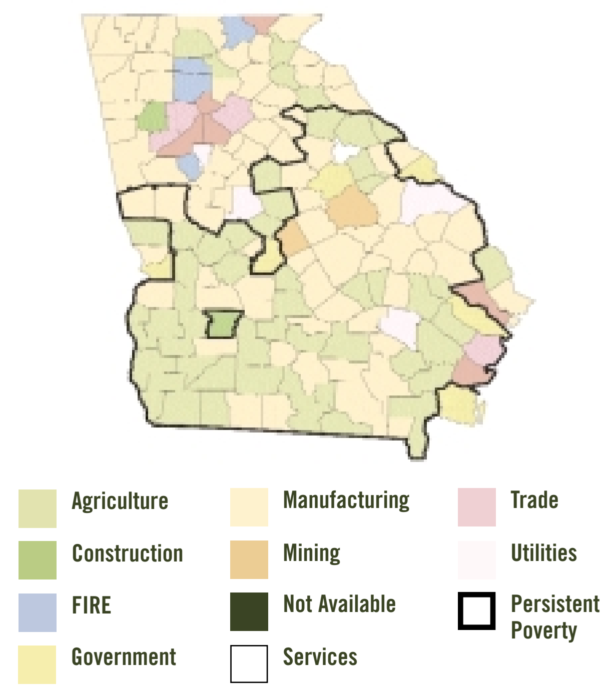
Analysis of disparities between PPR counties and the state as a whole are also compelling, particularly in terms of income and unemployment levels. The per capita income in the 91-county persistent poverty region is more than $5,500 lower than the average in the entire state of Georgia. At the same time, the impoverished region's unemployment rate is 29% higher than the rate for the state (7.1% vs. 5.5%).[20]

These findings confirm complementary research sponsored by the Georgia Rural Development Council. This research evaluated the economic conditions in the 91-county persistent poverty region using three key measures of economic health.

Output. Total economic output for the 91-county region is $74.7 billion–nearly 16% of Georgia's total output of $470.0 billion. Manufacturing is the poverty region's primary economic engine, producing 35.6% of total economic output; agriculture, government, mining, services, trade, utilities, and other engines combine to produce the remaining 64.4%. Agriculture is the main economic engine in 53 counties, 44 (83%) of which are in the poverty region (Figure 5).

Economic vitality. Every county classified as declining rural or lagging rural on the Georgia Rural Development Council's Economic Vitality Index[21] (54 counties) is located within the persistent poverty region of Georgia. Of the state's 16 rapidly developing counties, none are located in the persistent poverty region; and only five of the state's 91 persistent poverty counties are considered developing on the Index (Figure 6).

FIGURE 5: OUTPUT SECTORS



Fiscal capacity. The relative income generating potential of counties is an indicator of how well they are able to raise sufficient revenues for needs related to basic education and social services. In Georgia, the top tier of fiscal capacity includes those counties with an index score of 111% or better.[22] Fourteen counties in Georgia are in that top tier. Of those 14 counties, only four are located within the 91-county persistent poverty region. The two bottom tiers of fiscal capacity in Georgia include those counties with an index score of 75% or worse. Sixty-one (61) of Georgia's 159 counties fall in the two bottom tiers of fiscal capacity. Of those 61, the majority (46 counties or 75.4%) is located within the 91-county persistent poverty region (Figure 7).

The production of goods and services per worker is lower in the PPR than in the non-PPR, thus giving the non-PPR a competitive edge over the PPR. The productive capacity of goods and services underlies the creation of wealth. Creation of wealth will be necessary in the PPR if persistent poverty is to be eliminated.

It is natural to ask what would be gained if we "fix" the problem of persistent poverty in Georgia. To answer this question, we estimated the return–or financial gain–to both households and the government that could be expected from a successful effort to eliminate the output gaps between the 91 counties in the PPR region and the rest of the state (the non-PPR counties).

If the economic gaps between the non-PPR and PPR were eliminated in the service sector alone, the PPR region would

- *Enjoy additional income of $18 billion.*
- *Boast 389,000 additional jobs.*
- *Return $1.5 billion to government coffers–$692 million to state and local governments and an additional $809 million to the federal treasury.*

These gains (or "opportunity costs") are even more impressive if we could close the gap in each of the most disadvantaged sectors as well–trade, FIRE (Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate), and services. In this case, employment would increase by 856,000 jobs and $5 billion would be returned to the public sector for reallocation to other priority investments.

It has become increasingly clear through various economic measures that the persistent poverty region is disproportionately disadvantaged.

FIGURE 6: ECONOMIC VITALITY

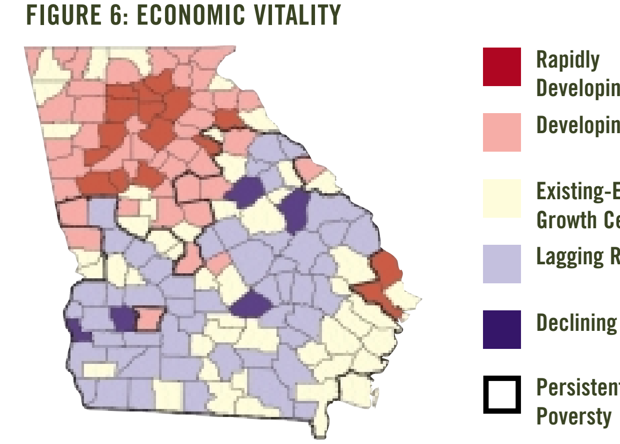
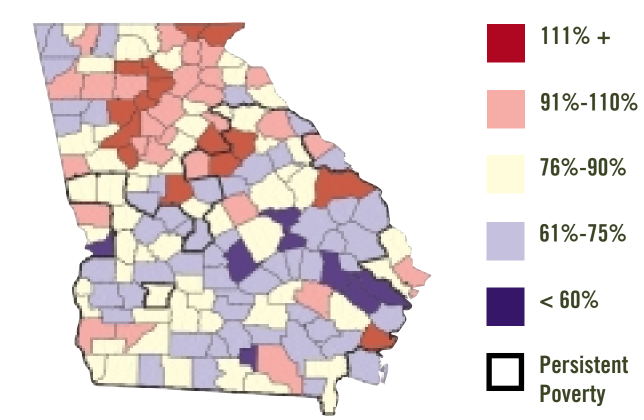


FIGURE 7: FISCAL CAPACITY



POSITIVE DIRECTIONS

Within the 91-county persistent poverty region of Georgia, there are several rural communities that display leadership for improving the vitality of economic and human capital development efforts. All of the counties share a sizable growth in population from 1980 to 2000, and at least a 15% increase in per capita income from 1995 to 2000.[23] The downtown areas in the main cities of many of these counties are recognized nationally as Main Street cities and have received technical assistance and resources to build a stronger local economy. Furthermore, the percent of high school graduates

in each county is above the state average.[24] Although many counties fall below the state average on other indicators relating to the conditions of children and families, Family Connection Partnership collaboratives are working in each county to seek improvements in areas of need.

Douglas/Coffee County has provided extensive leadership and local commitment for development along US Highway 441, including efforts to attract a Wal-Mart Distribution Center. The county has received a South Georgia EXCEL (Early Learning Opportunities Act) Grant and implements a Girl Power Program for high-risk girls ages 9-15.

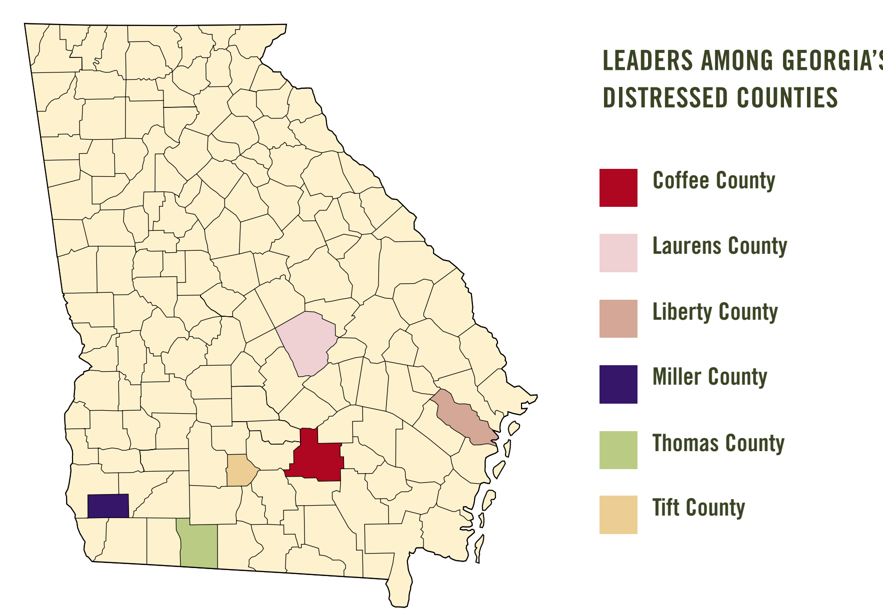
Dublin/Laurens County serves as a regional center for education and training through several institutions–including satellite campuses for University of Georgia, Middle Georgia College, and Georgia Southern University as well as the Heart of Georgia Technical College whose campus contains the DuBose Porter Business and Industry Training Center. The county built a welcome center along I-16 to increase tourism. Bank of America and the United Way provide funds for a "Success by 6 Initiative" to ensure that all children reach school age healthy, well-nurtured, and ready to succeed.

Hinesville/Liberty County, home of the Fort Stewart military installation–a primary economic engine in the county–implemented aggressive efforts to increase housing for retaining retired military personnel. The county has shown impeccable local government leadership and management working in concert with the military base and boasts a high school dropout rate below the state average. Literacy is promoted through a Georgia Reads grant, and the Family Connection collaborative also has an affiliate program entitled Pathways to Success focused on life skill enrichment and prevention.

Colquitt/Miller County initiated extensive downtown development and historic preservation efforts with the Tarrer Inn, Cotton Hall, and the entire town square is listed on the National Historic Register. In addition, Colquitt has been recognized as a Better Hometown Community, Georgia's small town equivalent to a Main Street City. The county also exhibits a strong community vision and commitment to rural arts and culture, as exemplified by its production of Swamp Gravy, the "Official Folk Life Play of Georgia," which has received national attention.

Thomasville/Thomas County is a leader in agri-business development through the GENESIS Food Park, a restored manufacturing building that now houses a vegetable processing plant serving several counties. With Thomasville's downtown area generally known as the retail hub for parts of southwest Georgia and north Florida, the city recently partnered with Flowers Industries to relocate over 100 jobs to the historic JC Penney's building. The county has shown great foresight by incorporating technological innovation and providing high-speed Internet service.

Tifton/Tift County is Georgia's center for farm experimentation and agricultural education, and houses the Agrirama, University of Georgia Rural Development Center, and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. In response to their human capital development efforts for youth and children, Tifton has distinguished itself as the "Reading Capital of the World."



Locally-initiated community economic development offers a ray of hope for breaking the cycle of persistent poverty.

IMPEDIMENTS TO BUILDING WEALTH

THE HUMAN AND ECONOMIC REALITIES OF PERSISTENT POVERTY IN GEORGIA POSE MAJOR CHALLENGES TO BUILDING WEALTH. WHILE SEVERAL COUNTIES HAVE TAKEN BOLD STEPS TO ADDRESS PERSISTENT POVERTY, WE STILL HAVE 91 COUNTIES WHOSE POVERTY RATES HAVE BEEN AMONG THE WORST IN THE NATION OVER THE LAST THREE CENSUS PERIODS. THESE COUNTIES SHARE SEVERAL CHARACTERISTICS WORTHY OF NOTE.

Poor return on state investments. Georgia has experienced a lower return than expected on investments. In particular, the state's investment strategies, including incentives for rural Georgia, have not produced the anticipated increase in wealth in rural Georgia.

Inadequate job opportunities. Low wage manufacturing is not the answer for building wealth. The growth in manufacturing jobs has produced low wage and low skill opportunities. The manufacturing sector provides the largest percentage of output in both PPR and non-PPR counties, but PPR counties have a significantly lower output per capita and per square mile. Interestingly, food processing is the largest manufacturing industry in both the PPR and non-PPR but does not appear to benefit the economies of each region in the same way.

Barriers to workforce development. Georgia's workforce is not competitive. One factor is the low education levels found among working adults in PPR counties. Compounding this is the loss of population or slow growth in the region, undermining support for a strong work force and the ability to attract high paying jobs.

Housing shortages. Mobile homes are far too common in the PPR and skilled labor to build adequate, safe housing is in short supply.

Lack of economic flexibility. Georgia's economic capacity and diversity are not sufficiently developed in the PPR to respond to shifts in economic needs and conditions. The state's economy is not sophisticated enough, for example, to absorb major job losses like the shifts in the textile industry without serious consequences.

Limitations linked with persistent poverty. Areas dominated by persistent poverty traditionally do not attract new industry, place less emphasis on school and healthcare systems, and have a limited tax capacity to pay for services.

There are no easy answers. Moving away from the policies of the past that led to dependency and failed to build wealth in individuals and in the community will require an openness to new ideas and new approaches. Most of all, it will require the coordinated efforts of the government, community, and private sector. Needed improvements in education, health status, housing, and workforce participation must be seen as the responsibility of all and cannot be delegated to any one agency or level of government.

LAYING A FOUNDATION

THE FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY ON PERSISTENT POVERTY IN THE SOUTH AUGMENT SEVERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BREAKING THE CYCLE OF POVERTY THAT HAVE BEEN PRESENTED IN PREVIOUS REPORTS.

These include the State of Rural Georgia Report published by the Georgia Rural Development Council, and multiple publications by the Southern Growth Policy Board. Together they serve to provide a coherent strategy that, if supported with strong and sustained leadership over time, can indeed foster meaningful change.[25, 26, 27]

Many of the recommendations speak to the need for a shift from industrial development to community development. The key components of that strategy are outlined below.

Partner with local leadership. Local leadership must be an active and committed participant in the development process. Without the commitment and initiative of local leaders, the state's return on investment in rural communities has been, and will continue to be, minimal.

Involve local community residents. The needs and concerns of those living in persistent poverty throughout Georgia must be recognized as policies are developed to address the issues at hand. Local leadership needs to ensure that the views of residents remain represented at the state level.

Begin with building a workforce capable of competing for quality jobs. A competitive workforce rests at the heart of all successful development efforts. Garnering the resources and sustaining the commitment to improving educational attainment means involvement of the entire community. A stronger workforce is important for discouraging businesses in Georgia from importing workers from outside the state.

Maximize and measure return on investment. Many of Georgia's most distressed communities have received significant state assistance yet continue to lag in social and economic indicators. Investment must focus on achieving results. Enhancing return on investment will require setting both short- and long-term benchmarks, greater coordination among

Poverty continues to take its toll and will not abate on its own.

investment partners, and a realistic assessment of communities' capacity for development.

Leverage private sector investment. As state partners and investors in rural Georgia, local private sector participation is essential for achieving results and accomplishing community and regional social, community, and economic development goals.

Empower regional entities to design and implement regional development objectives. Long-range development goals and challenges cross jurisdictional boundaries and require regional cooperation. Allocation of scarce resources should

be directed toward regionally developed solutions sponsored by multi jurisdictional entities and authorities. Regional growth must be based on natural markets and a critical mass of the population. Success will not occur if support for only county-by-county efforts is continued.

Reexamine economic growth policy and state reinvestment practices. Less emphasis should be placed on competing for low-wage manufacturing jobs that seem to perpetuate persistent poverty throughout the state. Instead, more diverse job opportunities should be identified that will boost family income levels. In addition, policies should place first priority on the retention and expansion of existing jobs in the state before investing in attracting new jobs.

Fine-tune investments to adjust for readiness. There are various stages in the economic development process. Some rural communities are not in a position to attract large employers, regardless of the incentives offered. Many require assistance in completing key infrastructure projects and workforce training. Investments in rural areas must follow assessments of community readiness and respond with resources for services and financing according to specific needs.

Focus investments to capitalize on local assets. Communities have a variety of strengths and weaknesses that shape their development efforts. State assistance, limited by uniform rules and federal regulations, often fails to capitalize on unique, non-traditional approaches for development and local innovation. Assistance programs for rural communities should recognize regional and local differences and be adaptable to a variety of obstacles and opportunities instead of using a one-size-fits-all approach. Again, the need to combine efforts of counties may be important to address in policies designed to maximize the development of local assets.

Ensure coordination among all government entities and maximize utilization of existing resources. Common development policies and objectives that cut across agencies and programs are needed to facilitate investment in rural Georgia. Currently, communities must adjust development approaches to accommodate the varying objectives, requirements, and funding cycles of direct assistance programs. Common targets and greater coordination among state agencies to address the comprehensive, multi faceted set of development opportunities and challenges facing rural communities would enhance development efforts in rural Georgia.

CONCLUSION

What Georgia most lacks is a coherent, comprehensive strategy that responds to current conditions in our poverty counties, accommodates broader social and economic trends, and champions public policies that will break the cycle of poverty once and for all. State and local leaders can and must work together to design a systematic strategy that builds on the solid foundation that already exists and facilitates a systematic shift from industrial development to community development. Georgia's strategy must be consistent with and supportive of any federal initiative designed to address persistent poverty in the South. Further delay will only further exacerbate the human suffering and economic costs.

COMPARISON OF DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Variable	U.S.	Southeast PP Counties (n=242)	GA	GA PP Counties (n=91)	All Other GA Counties (n=68)
Percent of population reporting White as primary race (2000)	77.1	62.6	66.1	61.3	67.5
Percent of population reporting African American as primary race or in combination with other races (2000)	12.9	33.9	29.2	36.1	27.3
Percent of population reporting Hispanic American as primary race (2000)	12.5	2.9	5.3	3.4	5.9
Percent of the population living in poverty (2000)	12.4	19.4	13.0	20.9	10.8
Percent of children living in poverty, under 18 years of age (2000)	16.1	25.0	16.7	27.4	13.8
Percent of elders living in poverty, age 65 and older (2000)	9.9	18.2	13.5	19.2	11.5
Percent age 25 & older without a high school diploma (2000)	19.6	27.7	21.4	29.5	19.2
Low birth weight birth rate per 1000 births (1996-98)	74.8	95.7	86.2	96.5	83.3
Percent of mobile homes per housing units (2000)	7.6	24.9	12.0	25.8	7.9
Unemployment (2000)	5.8	7.1	5.5	7.1	5.1
Per capita income (2000)	$21,587	$16,049	$21,154	$15,602	$22,717

Note: All data were obtained from the U.S Bureau of the Census except for the low birth weight birth rates.

POVERTY-RELATED DATA BY COUNTY

U.S. Census Bureau

County		2000 Total Population	Percent of Total Population: 2000 White	African Amer	Asians	Other	Hispanic	Age 0-17	Age 65+	Population Living Below Poverty Level 1980 #	1980 %	1990 #	1990 %	2000 #	2000 %	2000 Adults No H.S. Ed	2000 Une. Rate	2000 Per Capita Income	2000 % Mobile Home	% Low Weight Births
Appling	*	17,419	77.3%	19.8%	0.4%	2.8%	4.8%	27.1%	11.8%	4,466	29.0%	3,087	19.9%	3,196	18.6%	32.7%	4.8	$15,044	36.7%	7.5%
Atkinson	*	7,609	67.5%	19.8%	0.3%	12.5%	17.3%	30.3%	9.3%	1,820	31.3%	1,812	26.0%	1,746	23.0%	43.7%	5.2	$12,178	43.5%	8.0%
Bacon	*	10,103	82.3%	16.1%	0.4%	1.6%	3.4%	26.2%	12.8%	2,138	23.1%	2,263	24.1%	2,335	23.7%	32.3%	4.5	$14,289	33.4%	6.2%
Baker	*	4,074	47.9%	50.6%	0.0%	1.6%	2.7%	27.3%	13.7%	1,038	27.4%	896	24.8%	951	23.4%	34.0%	8.3	$16,969	41.3%	10.3%
Baldwin	*	44,700	54.6%	43.8%	1.2%	0.7%	1.4%	21.7%	10.8%	4,964	16.4%	5,833	17.5%	6,190	16.8%	27.4%	8.2	$16,271	26.7%	11.2%
Banks		14,422	96.8%	3.3%	0.7%	2.2%	3.4%	26.2%	10.5%	1,008	11.6%	1,553	15.1%	1,836	12.5%	34.6%	3.0	$17,424	38.3%	7.4%
Barrow		46,144	85.9%	10.1%	2.5%	2.3%	3.2%	26.4%	9.1%	3,556	16.8%	4,314	14.7%	3,787	8.3%	25.7%	4.2	$18,350	16.5%	7.1%
Bartow		76,019	88.8%	9.3%	0.7%	1.9%	3.3%	27.9%	9.4%	5,220	12.9%	5,930	10.7%	6,446	8.6%	29.2%	4.0	$18,989	19.3%	6.1%
Ben Hill	*	17,484	63.9%	32.2%	0.4%	3.1%	4.8%	27.5%	13.3%	3,863	24.6%	3,532	22.0%	3,810	22.3%	34.2%	8.3	$14,093	25.2%	11.6%
Berrien	*	16,235	86.3%	11.8%	0.4%	1.7%	2.4%	27.2%	12.5%	2,708	20.1%	2,674	19.3%	2,827	17.7%	34.0%	4.5	$16,376	36.8%	7.1%
Bibb		153,887	50.7%	47.7%	1.3%	0.7%	1.3%	26.6%	12.7%	28,591	19.5%	27,932	19.2%	28,370	19.1%	22.6%	7.5	$19,058	3.3%	11.5%
Bleckley	*	11,666	73.8%	24.8%	1.0%	0.6%	0.9%	26.6%	13.8%	1,862	18.3%	1,830	16.3%	1,751	15.9%	28.3%	6.0	$15,934	24.4%	10.1%
Brantley	*	14,629	96.4%	4.2%	0.2%	0.8%	1.3%	28.3%	10.1%	1,615	18.6%	1,994	16.2%	2,286	15.6%	27.6%	4.9	$13,713	57.8%	6.9%
Brooks	*	16,450	58.1%	39.7%	0.5%	1.3%	3.1%	26.9%	15.3%	4,841	32.2%	3,886	25.9%	3,786	23.4%	32.6%	5.3	$13,977	33.3%	8.7%
Bryan		23,417	83.8%	14.7%	1.2%	0.8%	2.3%	31.1%	7.3%	2,617	20.0%	2,020	15.2%	2,715	11.7%	21.0%	3.1	$19,794	25.2%	7.9%
Bulloch	*	55,983	69.3%	29.1%	1.0%	1.3%	1.6%	22.3%	9.3%	7,054	21.8%	10,820	27.5%	12,925	24.5%	22.1%	10.2	$16,080	24.2%	6.8%
Burke	*	22,243	47.7%	51.3%	0.5%	0.2%	1.4%	31.3%	10.2%	5,442	28.5%	6,147	20.3%	6,348	28.7%	35.1%	9.3	$13,136	34.8%	10.1%
Butts		19,522	70.0%	29.2%	0.4%	0.8%	1.4%	24.1%	10.2%	2,025	16.5%	2,132	15.6%	2,017	11.5%	33.2%	3.9	$17,016	17.3%	12.4%
Calhoun	*	6,320	38.6%	60.8%	0.2%	0.6%	3.3%	22.1%	12.6%	1,647	29.2%	1,556	31.8%	1,326	26.5%	34.5%	5.6	$11,839	29.3%	12.8%
Camden		43,664	76.6%	20.8%	1.6%	1.9%	3.6%	31.7%	5.2%	2,896	21.8%	3,123	11.5%	4,221	10.1%	16.7%	5.6	$16,445	19.3%	7.0%
Candler	*	9,577	66.0%	27.4%	0.4%	6.6%	9.2%	26.8%	15.2%	2,062	28.9%	1,792	24.1%	2,398	26.1%	43.1%	7.2	$12,958	37.3%	9.7%
Carroll		87,268	81.5%	16.8%	0.8%	1.5%	2.6%	25.9%	10.0%	8,529	15.7%	9,890	14.4%	11,426	13.7%	29.9%	4.8	$17,656	18.1%	7.8%
Catoosa		53,282	97.3%	1.4%	0.9%	0.6%	1.2%	25.8%	11.6%	4,156	11.2%	5,027	12.0%	4,966	9.4%	24.0%	3.3	$18,009	16.6%	7.8%
Charlton	*	10,282	69.6%	29.7%	0.5%	0.3%	0.8%	27.5%	9.7%	1,638	21.3%	1,531	16.3%	1,893	20.9%	34.9%	5.2	$12,920	44.8%	7.4%
Chatham		232,048	56.2%	41.3%	2.1%	1.3%	2.3%	26.0%	12.8%	36,347	18.4%	35,986	17.2%	35,042	15.6%	19.6%	8.1	$21,152	5.8%	10.1%
Chattahoochee		14,882	60.7%	31.6%	2.7%	6.8%	10.4%	28.4%	1.8%	1,318	11.8%	1,086	10.4%	1,051	10.6%	11.2%	7.6	$14,049	19.8%	7.6%
Chattooga		25,470	87.6%	11.6%	0.2%	1.1%	2.1%	22.9%	14.3%	3,546	16.4%	3,238	14.6%	3,386	14.3%	33.6%	5.6	$14,538	22.4%	6.8%
Cherokee		141,903	93.6%	2.7%	1.1%	3.1%	5.4%	26.3%	6.8%	5,460	10.7%	5,421	6.1%	7,474	5.3%	15.6%	2.7	$24,871	7.8%	5.9%
Clarke	*	101,489	66.1%	27.8%	3.6%	3.6%	6.3%	17.8%	8.1%	13,896	20.7%	21,420	27.0%	26,337	28.3%	19.0%	10.2	$17,123	6.8%	9.5%
Clay	*	3,357	38.7%	60.8%	0.3%	0.3%	1.3%	25.7%	19.5%	1,424	40.7%	1,170	35.7%	1,030	31.3%	35.7%	8.8	$16,819	42.3%	7.4%
Clayton		236,517	39.2%	52.7%	5.0%	4.4%	7.5%	30.0%	5.6%	12,317	8.0%	15,386	8.6%	23,493	10.1%	13.9%	5.5	$18,079	4.4%	9.2%
Clinch	*	6,878	69.7%	29.9%	0.1%	0.1%	0.8%	27.9%	11.8%	1,735	26.4%	1,830	26.4%	1,536	23.4%	41.1%	4.2	$13,023	32.1%	7.1%
Cobb		607,751	73.8%	19.6%	3.5%	4.4%	7.7%	26.1%	6.2%	18,663	6.3%	25,081	5.6%	38,910	6.5%	11.2%	3.8	$27,863	2.1%	7.1%
Coffee	*	37,413	69.0%	26.2%	0.7%	4.5%	6.8%	28.3%	9.8%	6,323	24.0%	6,564	22.5%	6,859	19.1%	35.2%	6.4	$15,530	39.1%	9.7%
Colquitt	*	42,053	68.6%	23.8%	0.6%	7.6%	10.8%	27.4%	12.8%	6,847	19.5%	8,159	22.8%	8,205	19.8%	35.1%	6.3	$14,457	28.6%	9.4%
Columbia		89,288	84.0%	11.8%	4.0%	1.1%	2.6%	29.6%	8.3%	4,365	10.9%	4,255	6.6%	4,540	5.1%	12.1%	3.7	$23,496	13.6%	6.5%
Cook	*	15,771	68.5%	29.6%	0.6%	1.7%	3.1%	28.2%	13.3%	2,663	19.1%	2,972	22.4%	3,221	20.7%	35.4%	6.3	$13,486	35.2%	8.5%
Coweta		89,215	79.8%	18.3%	0.9%	1.5%	3.1%	28.7%	8.5%	6,608	16.7%	6,079	11.4%	6,896	7.8%	19.4%	3.9	$21,949	6.7%	7.7%
Crawford	*	12,495	73.7%	24.2%	0.3%	2.3%	2.4%	27.6%	9.2%	1,400	18.5%	1,234	14.0%	1,934	15.4%	32.7%	4.6	$15,768	41.1%	6.3%
Crisp	*	21,996	54.6%	43.8%	0.9%	1.2%	1.7%	29.0%	13.3%	5,479	28.6%	5,882	29.0%	6,330	29.3%	34.1%	7.0	$14,695	21.4%	11.4%
Dade		15,154	96.3%	0.7%	0.5%	0.3%	0.9%	22.8%	12.3%	2,063	17.3%	1,836	14.6%	1,434	9.7%	33.0%	5.4	$16,127	24.6%	6.0%
Dawson		15,999	98.1%	0.5%	0.4%	0.8%	1.6%	25.1%	9.3%	807	19.0%	1,231	12.8%	1,210	7.6%	23.6%	3.4	$22,520	16.8%	6.0%
Decatur	*	28,240	57.7%	40.2%	0.4%	1.6%	3.2%	26.5%	13.3%	5,962	23.7%	5,839	25.3%	6,240	22.7%	33.3%	6.5	$15,063	23.6%	9.1%
DeKalb		665,865	37.0%	55.3%	4.5%	4.7%	7.9%	24.6%	8.3%	46,315	9.7%	62,779	9.9%	70,494	10.8%	14.9%	5.5	$23,968	0.3%	9.4%
Dodge	*	19,171	69.3%	29.8%	0.3%	0.2%	1.3%	26.0%	13.2%	4,667	27.4%	3,824	21.8%	3,088	17.4%	33.7%	5.4	$14,468	27.7%	10.4%
Dooly	*	11,525	46.6%	49.8%	0.7%	3.2%	4.7%	25.6%	11.8%	3,619	33.9%	3,191	22.9%	2,255	22.1%	31.6%	6.4	$13,628	29.1%	9.5%
Dougherty	*	96,065	38.3%	60.5%	0.7%	0.7%	1.3%	27.7%	11.7%	20,550	20.8%	23,032	24.4%	22,974	24.8%	25.3%	10.1	$16,645	8.1%	11.3%
Douglas		92,174	76.5%	19.2%	1.5%	1.8%	2.9%	27.6%	7.6%	4,244	7.9%	4,829	6.6%	7,080	7.8%	18.9%	3.8	$21,172	7.9%	7.2%
Early	*	12,354	50.7%	48.5%	0.4%	0.8%	1.2%	28.7%	15.7%	4,065	31.1%	3,836	31.4%	3,094	25.7%	31.6%	9.1	$14,936	33.1%	12.0%
Echols	*	3,754	78.1%	7.3%	0.1%	14.1%	19.7%	29.3%	9.1%	585	25.6%	341	14.6%	1,080	28.7%	38.5%	3.7	$15,727	56.7%	9.1%

POVERTY-RELATED DATA BY COUNTY

U.S. Census Bureau

		2000 Total Population	Percent of Total Population: 2000							Population Living Below Poverty Level						2000 Adults No H.S. Ed	2003 Une. Rate	2000 Per Capita Income	2000 % Mobile Home	% Low Weight Births
			White	African Amer	Asians	Other	Hispanic	Age 0-17	Age 65+	1990 #	1990 %	1999 #	1999 %	2003 #	2003 %					
Effingham		37,535	85.8%	13.3%	0.7%	0.8%	1.4%	29.9%	8.3%	3,061	16.9%	3,286	12.7%	3,486	9.3%	21.1%	4.2	$16,872	32.9%	7.8%
Elbert		20,511	67.6%	31.0%	0.3%	1.3%	2.4%	25.8%	14.8%	3,665	19.7%	3,689	19.7%	3,498	17.3%	32.6%	5.8	$14,535	27.0%	7.9%
Emanuel	*	21,837	64.1%	33.5%	0.4%	2.3%	3.4%	27.8%	13.3%	5,404	26.5%	5,176	25.7%	5,812	27.4%	38.6%	4.4	$13,627	26.3%	9.9%
Evans	*	10,495	62.2%	33.1%	0.4%	4.5%	6.0%	27.5%	12.6%	2,113	25.4%	2,124	25.4%	2,687	27.0%	34.3%	8.1	$12,756	38.1%	7.9%
Fannin		19,798	99.0%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.7%	20.9%	19.0%	3,379	23.1%	2,730	17.2%	2,429	12.4%	29.1%	3.9	$16,269	15.8%	6.2%
Fayette		91,263	84.9%	11.8%	2.8%	1.1%	2.8%	29.1%	8.2%	1,637	5.3%	1,628	2.8%	2,386	2.6%	7.6%	2.6	$29,464	4.1%	6.6%
Floyd		90,565	82.3%	13.6%	1.1%	3.3%	5.5%	24.6%	13.6%	9,564	12.3%	10,636	13.6%	12,536	14.4%	28.5%	5.7	$17,808	9.8%	8.1%
Forsyth		98,407	95.9%	0.8%	1.0%	2.7%	5.8%	27.9%	7.1%	2,990	10.7%	2,954	6.8%	5,382	5.5%	14.3%	2.1	$29,114	10.3%	6.7%
Franklin		20,285	90.2%	9.1%	0.4%	0.8%	0.9%	22.9%	15.3%	2,949	19.8%	2,881	16.5%	2,724	13.9%	33.0%	4.2	$15,787	31.0%	9.8%
Fulton		816,006	49.1%	45.2%	3.4%	3.2%	5.9%	24.4%	8.5%	121,399	21.2%	115,511	18.4%	124,241	15.7%	16.0%	8.9	$30,003	0.4%	9.8%
Gilmer		23,456	94.7%	0.3%	0.3%	4.5%	7.7%	24.3%	13.1%	2,232	20.4%	2,176	16.6%	2,892	12.5%	34.0%	4.2	$17,147	22.7%	5.7%
Glascock	*	2,556	90.8%	8.5%	0.5%	0.2%	0.5%	23.8%	18.2%	472	20.7%	376	16.8%	439	17.2%	33.9%	12.3	$14,185	36.2%	5.9%
Glynn	*	67,568	71.5%	26.2%	0.9%	1.2%	3.0%	25.3%	14.4%	8,775	16.1%	8,794	14.3%	10,120	15.1%	17.6%	5.8	$21,707	13.1%	8.9%
Gordon		44,104	90.6%	3.7%	0.7%	5.3%	7.4%	26.1%	10.6%	3,872	12.9%	3,852	11.1%	4,283	9.9%	34.1%	3.5	$17,586	16.2%	6.3%
Grady	*	23,659	65.3%	30.5%	0.4%	3.4%	5.2%	27.3%	13.2%	5,071	25.8%	4,446	22.3%	4,982	21.3%	30.6%	7.4	$14,276	31.6%	10.6%
Greene	*	14,406	53.4%	44.7%	0.3%	1.8%	2.9%	25.1%	14.4%	3,009	26.6%	2,927	25.1%	3,155	22.3%	29.9%	8.7	$23,389	20.4%	10.7%
Gwinnett		588,448	74.3%	13.3%	7.8%	5.4%	10.9%	28.2%	5.4%	9,269	5.6%	13,981	4.0%	33,087	5.7%	12.7%	3.3	$25,006	2.3%	6.7%
Habersham		35,902	89.8%	4.8%	2.2%	3.8%	7.7%	23.5%	13.8%	3,440	14.7%	2,982	11.6%	4,146	12.2%	28.1%	4.2	$17,706	23.8%	8.0%
Hall		139,277	82.0%	7.5%	1.5%	9.5%	19.6%	26.9%	9.4%	8,120	10.9%	9,957	10.6%	16,980	12.4%	28.5%	3.8	$19,690	15.6%	6.8%
Hancock	*	10,076	21.7%	78.0%	0.1%	0.3%	0.6%	24.1%	12.0%	3,665	39.3%	2,826	30.1%	2,546	29.4%	37.6%	13.7	$10,916	36.0%	10.0%
Haralson		25,690	93.8%	5.8%	0.4%	0.3%	0.8%	26.1%	13.0%	2,764	16.2%	3,117	14.4%	3,914	16.5%	37.0%	4.1	$16,822	27.5%	6.9%
Harris		23,695	79.2%	19.7%	0.7%	0.5%	1.1%	26.6%	11.8%	2,635	17.2%	2,407	13.7%	1,929	8.2%	21.0%	3.4	$21,680	15.8%	8.4%
Hart		22,997	79.6%	19.6%	0.6%	0.4%	0.6%	23.5%	16.5%	3,039	16.6%	2,742	14.2%	3,329	14.8%	29.9%	5.3	$16,714	25.7%	9.8%
Heard		11,012	88.1%	11.1%	0.2%	0.7%	1.1%	26.7%	11.0%	1,062	16.8%	1,819	19.1%	1,480	13.6%	34.0%	5.7	$15,132	38.5%	6.3%
Henry		119,341	82.3%	15.1%	2.1%	1.1%	2.3%	29.2%	7.4%	3,776	10.5%	3,514	6.1%	5,821	4.9%	15.8%	2.7	$22,945	7.2%	6.5%
Houston		110,765	71.9%	25.3%	2.2%	1.4%	3.3%	28.2%	9.3%	8,627	11.2%	9,272	10.6%	11,058	10.2%	15.7%	4.9	$19,515	12.9%	8.8%
Irwin	*	9,931	72.3%	26.3%	0.4%	1.4%	2.3%	26.8%	14.1%	2,168	24.7%	2,316	27.2%	1,681	17.8%	32.3%	5.0	$14,867	32.1%	9.0%
Jackson		41,589	89.9%	8.1%	1.2%	1.3%	3.3%	26.6%	10.4%	3,642	14.1%	4,157	14.1%	4,876	12.0%	31.9%	3.4	$17,808	30.8%	6.0%
Jasper	*	11,428	71.7%	27.6%	0.2%	0.8%	2.1%	27.2%	11.8%	1,626	20.4%	1,462	17.4%	1,834	14.2%	30.2%	4.7	$19,249	24.1%	7.4%
Jeff Davis	*	12,684	81.7%	15.2%	0.5%	2.6%	5.1%	27.2%	11.8%	1,947	17.1%	2,242	18.8%	2,434	19.4%	38.7%	5.6	$13,780	34.8%	8.3%
Jefferson	*	17,266	42.4%	56.5%	0.2%	1.3%	1.5%	26.4%	13.7%	5,492	30.4%	5,312	31.3%	3,884	23.0%	41.5%	11.6	$13,491	27.6%	11.0%
Jenkins	*	8,575	56.9%	40.6%	0.3%	2.2%	3.3%	26.5%	13.6%	2,921	33.8%	2,247	27.8%	2,419	26.4%	38.0%	10.7	$13,400	35.2%	6.8%
Johnson	*	8,560	62.7%	37.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.9%	30.1%	15.8%	2,223	26.1%	1,809	22.2%	1,800	22.6%	37.6%	5.6	$12,384	31.4%	12.8%
Jones		23,639	75.6%	23.8%	0.7%	0.4%	0.7%	27.1%	10.3%	2,429	14.9%	2,202	10.8%	2,376	10.2%	22.1%	4.5	$19,126	31.5%	9.0%
Lamar		15,912	68.5%	30.8%	0.4%	0.5%	1.1%	24.5%	12.6%	1,950	16.3%	2,079	16.3%	1,682	11.2%	28.7%	5.5	$16,666	18.6%	10.0%
Lanier	*	7,241	72.7%	25.9%	0.7%	0.8%	1.7%	27.4%	10.6%	1,663	28.4%	1,412	25.9%	1,284	16.5%	33.0%	6.2	$13,690	40.6%	7.5%
Laurens	*	44,874	63.9%	34.8%	0.9%	0.6%	1.2%	26.8%	13.3%	7,215	20.1%	7,941	20.5%	8,036	18.4%	28.7%	6.2	$16,782	27.3%	10.2%
Lee		24,757	82.8%	15.7%	1.0%	0.7%	1.2%	30.7%	6.3%	1,900	16.7%	1,954	12.8%	1,956	8.2%	19.7%	3.4	$19,897	19.1%	8.3%
Liberty	*	61,610	46.9%	44.6%	2.6%	5.8%	8.2%	32.0%	3.6%	6,298	20.9%	7,745	17.2%	8,464	15.0%	13.2%	6.6	$15,855	24.4%	6.4%
Lincoln	*	8,348	64.7%	34.5%	0.3%	0.3%	1.0%	24.4%	14.8%	1,231	16.3%	1,321	17.8%	1,270	15.3%	29.0%	6.0	$15,391	38.2%	9.6%
Long	*	10,304	69.9%	25.3%	1.0%	4.8%	8.4%	33.1%	5.8%	1,103	24.5%	1,449	23.7%	1,986	19.5%	25.7%	8.8	$12,586	60.6%	9.3%
Lowndes	*	92,115	63.0%	34.5%	1.6%	1.4%	2.7%	26.2%	9.3%	12,506	19.2%	14,246	19.9%	15,622	18.3%	22.3%	5.8	$16,683	14.8%	9.3%
Lumpkin		21,016	95.5%	1.6%	0.5%	1.8%	3.5%	24.3%	9.7%	1,605	16.6%	2,030	15.3%	2,632	13.2%	28.0%	4.0	$18,062	23.5%	6.0%
Macon	*	14,074	37.9%	59.8%	0.7%	1.7%	2.8%	27.6%	12.7%	4,445	32.5%	3,717	29.2%	3,377	25.8%	38.6%	9.1	$11,820	28.2%	11.3%
Madison		25,730	89.9%	8.8%	0.5%	1.3%	2.0%	26.3%	11.0%	2,845	16.1%	3,292	16.7%	2,984	11.6%	29.2%	2.7	$16,998	38.4%	7.0%
Marion	*	7,144	62.0%	34.5%	0.4%	3.1%	5.8%	28.3%	10.5%	1,564	29.8%	1,550	28.2%	1,576	22.4%	34.6%	3.6	$14,044	46.7%	11.6%
McDuffie	*	21,231	61.3%	37.6%	0.6%	0.5%	1.3%	27.9%	11.6%	3,760	20.5%	4,263	21.6%	3,882	18.4%	33.3%	7.7	$18,005	28.1%	11.9%
McIntosh	*	10,847	62.0%	37.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.9%	26.0%	11.8%	2,517	31.4%	1,910	22.3%	1,990	16.7%	28.6%	6.7	$14,253	43.5%	6.4%
Meriwether	*	22,534	56.7%	42.4%	0.3%	0.8%	0.8%	26.6%	13.8%	4,364	20.9%	4,886	22.4%	3,931	17.8%	34.2%	7.0	$15,708	22.8%	11.4%
Miller	*	6,383	70.6%	29.0%	0.1%	0.3%	0.7%	26.3%	17.1%	1,811	27.3%	1,357	22.1%	1,322	21.2%	31.0%	4.0	$15,436	24.5%	6.0%

POVERTY-RELATED DATA BY COUNTY

U.S. Census Bureau

		2000 Total Population	Percent of Total Population: 2000							Population Living Below Poverty Level						2000 Adults No H.S. Ed	2003 Une. Rate	2000 Per Capita Income	2000 % Mobile Home	% Low Weight Births
			White	African Amer	Asians	Other	Hispanic	Age 0-17	Age 65+	1990 #	1990 %	1999 #	1999 %	2003 #	2003 %					
Mitchell	*	23,932	50.1%	48.2%	0.4%	1.6%	2.1%	27.3%	11.7%	6,177	29.5%	5,712	26.7%	5,793	26.4%	34.7%	8.2	$13,042	28.9%	10.1%
Monroe		21,757	70.9%	28.2%	0.6%	0.3%	1.3%	26.3%	10.3%	2,235	15.9%	2,270	13.8%	2,089	9.8%	22.3%	3.4	$19,580	25.3%	10.8%
Montgomery	*	8,270	70.3%	27.4%	0.4%	2.3%	3.3%	25.0%	10.6%	1,605	23.5%	1,645	24.5%	1,495	19.9%	28.6%	3.9	$14,182	33.6%	7.1%
Morgan		15,457	70.3%	29.0%	0.5%	0.8%	1.6%	26.6%	12.5%	2,464	21.7%	1,896	15.0%	1,670	10.9%	28.0%	5.1	$18,823	20.7%	10.5%
Murray		36,506	96.1%	0.8%	0.4%	2.2%	5.6%	28.0%	8.0%	2,772	14.1%	2,940	11.3%	4,593	12.7%	38.9%	4.0	$16,230	39.6%	8.1%
Muscogee		186,291	51.8%	44.6%	2.0%	2.5%	4.5%	26.8%	11.7%	29,392	18.0%	21,941	18.6%	27,741	15.7%	21.1%	7.0	$18,262	3.8%	10.0%
Newton		62,001	76.1%	22.6%	0.9%	0.6%	1.6%	27.7%	9.6%	4,768	14.2%	5,873	14.4%	6,079	10.0%	25.3%	5.2	$19,317	8.7%	7.6%
Oconee		26,225	90.3%	6.6%	1.7%	1.6%	3.2%	30.2%	8.5%	1,247	10.1%	1,377	7.9%	1,686	6.5%	13.3%	3.7	$24,163	12.6%	5.8%
Oglethorpe	*	12,635	79.0%	20.2%	0.4%	0.8%	1.4%	26.8%	12.4%	1,875	18.8%	1,566	16.2%	1,681	13.2%	27.9%	3.0	$17,089	33.3%	7.5%
Paulding		81,678	91.6%	7.3%	0.6%	0.8%	1.7%	30.7%	5.8%	3,226	12.4%	3,606	8.8%	4,454	5.5%	18.2%	2.6	$19,974	8.7%	6.3%
Peach	*	23,668	51.9%	45.7%	0.5%	2.1%	4.2%	26.0%	9.8%	4,795	26.2%	4,831	24.0%	4,585	20.2%	25.6%	12.9	$16,031	19.4%	11.4%
Pickens		22,983	97.0%	1.3%	0.3%	1.2%	2.3%	23.6%	13.2%	1,969	17.1%	1,814	12.8%	2,080	9.2%	29.6%	2.3	$19,774	20.8%	5.9%
Pierce	*	15,636	87.5%	11.2%	0.3%	1.1%	2.3%	26.7%	12.2%	2,896	22.8%	2,837	21.3%	2,849	18.4%	30.2%	4.0	$14,230	34.1%	6.1%
Pike		13,688	84.1%	15.0%	0.5%	0.5%	1.2%	27.6%	10.8%	1,297	14.8%	1,339	13.4%	1,275	9.6%	24.7%	3.4	$17,661	17.5%	6.6%
Polk		38,127	81.3%	13.7%	0.4%	5.0%	7.7%	26.1%	13.2%	5,128	16.0%	5,437	16.3%	5,744	15.5%	35.7%	6.0	$15,617	12.8%	6.5%
Pulaski	*	9,588	63.7%	34.8%	0.5%	1.3%	2.8%	23.1%	13.3%	2,216	25.1%	1,934	24.3%	1,386	16.4%	28.6%	5.6	$16,435	20.3%	10.7%
Putnam	*	18,812	68.0%	30.3%	0.8%	1.2%	2.2%	23.2%	14.1%	2,021	20.1%	2,271	16.4%	2,898	14.6%	24.6%	3.8	$20,181	36.4%	7.8%
Quitman	*	2,598	52.5%	47.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%	24.0%	19.8%	868	40.7%	727	33.0%	586	21.9%	42.2%	5.8	$14,301	57.1%	6.3%
Rabun		15,050	95.7%	1.3%	0.5%	2.7%	4.5%	21.8%	18.1%	1,770	17.1%	1,561	13.6%	1,649	11.1%	24.6%	4.9	$20,608	15.7%	7.6%
Randolph	*	7,791	39.3%	59.7%	0.3%	0.6%	1.2%	27.3%	15.8%	3,119	33.7%	2,740	35.9%	2,070	27.7%	37.6%	7.9	$11,839	23.5%	11.0%
Richmond		199,775	46.8%	50.7%	2.0%	1.5%	2.8%	26.8%	10.8%	30,818	18.3%	32,590	18.2%	27,312	19.6%	22.0%	8.2	$17,088	9.2%	9.7%
Rockdale		70,111	76.8%	18.7%	2.1%	3.0%	6.0%	27.5%	9.2%	3,010	8.2%	3,289	6.2%	5,873	8.2%	17.6%	4.2	$22,300	4.3%	7.9%
Schley	*	3,766	66.6%	31.7%	0.3%	1.6%	2.4%	29.3%	11.1%	921	26.8%	710	19.9%	746	19.9%	30.0%	5.7	$14,981	40.3%	12.1%
Screven	*	15,374	53.9%	45.5%	0.4%	0.4%	1.0%	27.9%	14.0%	4,715	34.1%	3,112	22.9%	3,043	20.1%	33.1%	9.4	$13,894	37.2%	12.1%
Seminole	*	9,369	62.1%	34.8%	0.2%	3.0%	3.7%	26.2%	15.9%	2,100	23.4%	2,577	29.1%	2,141	23.2%	32.1%	7.0	$14,636	34.9%	10.9%
Spalding		58,417	67.2%	31.4%	0.9%	0.8%	1.6%	27.3%	11.7%	8,327	17.6%	8,352	15.8%	8,856	15.5%	32.2%	6.2	$16,791	10.6%	9.3%
Stephens		25,435	86.6%	12.4%	0.8%	0.6%	1.0%	23.5%	15.6%	3,135	14.8%	3,844	17.0%	3,702	15.1%	28.9%	4.2	$15,529	24.3%	10.0%
Stewart	*	5,252	37.7%	62.1%	0.4%	0.3%	1.5%	24.9%	18.5%	2,267	36.8%	1,741	31.4%	1,097	22.2%	38.6%	10.1	$16,071	31.5%	14.3%
Sumter	*	33,200	48.7%	49.3%	0.7%	1.4%	2.7%	27.8%	12.3%	6,463	23.2%	7,147	24.8%	6,726	21.4%	30.1%	8.8	$15,083	20.3%	11.9%
Talbot	*	6,498	37.3%	62.1%	0.3%	0.4%	1.3%	24.2%	14.4%	1,342	20.6%	1,819	24.9%	1,569	24.2%	35.2%	9.7	$14,539	38.3%	9.6%
Taliaferro	*	2,077	38.7%	60.7%	0.2%	0.6%	0.6%	24.1%	18.6%	558	32.4%	606	31.9%	479	23.4%	43.6%	6.6	$15,466	36.2%	11.1%
Tattnall	*	22,305	61.3%	31.8%	0.4%	7.0%	8.4%	22.9%	11.2%	4,494	28.3%	3,396	21.9%	4,389	23.9%	33.7%	6.6	$13,439	35.3%	9.0%
Taylor	*	8,815	56.1%	42.2%	0.3%	1.2%	1.9%	26.9%	13.3%	2,217	28.1%	2,244	29.5%	2,191	26.0%	38.4%	9.0	$13,432	40.3%	11.4%
Telfair	*	11,794	60.0%	38.7%	0.3%	1.3%	1.9%	22.5%	14.8%	2,968	26.5%	2,916	27.3%	2,159	21.2%	38.4%	6.5	$14,197	29.8%	10.4%
Terrell	*	10,970	38.4%	61.0%	0.6%	0.3%	1.2%	26.4%	13.0%	3,693	31.1%	3,042	29.1%	3,069	28.6%	35.5%	6.5	$13,894	18.8%	11.9%
Thomas	*	42,737	59.6%	39.2%	0.6%	0.7%	1.7%	27.1%	13.7%	7,969	21.4%	8,882	22.6%	7,231	17.4%	28.5%	6.5	$16,211	22.6%	7.9%
Tift	*	38,407	66.0%	28.3%	1.1%	5.0%	7.7%	27.2%	11.7%	7,110	22.6%	7,761	22.9%	7,374	19.9%	32.1%	8.8	$16,833	27.5%	10.6%
Toombs	*	26,067	69.7%	24.4%	0.6%	5.6%	8.8%	28.6%	12.2%	5,778	26.0%	5,653	24.0%	6,038	23.9%	32.7%	5.7	$14,252	26.2%	8.1%
Towns		9,319	99.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%	0.7%	16.5%	25.6%	1,177	22.7%	892	14.0%	1,043	11.8%	24.9%	3.6	$18,221	21.6%	7.9%
Treutlen	*	6,854	66.2%	33.3%	0.4%	0.5%	1.2%	26.0%	13.2%	1,767	29.3%	1,611	27.1%	1,739	26.3%	38.2%	5.4	$13,122	32.8%	10.2%
Troup	*	58,779	66.5%	32.2%	0.7%	0.9%	1.7%	27.9%	12.6%	8,840	16.0%	8,884	16.3%	8,421	14.8%	27.0%	6.2	$17,626	11.2%	9.5%
Turner	*	9,504	56.6%	41.1%	0.4%	1.9%	2.8%	29.4%	12.8%	3,008	32.0%	2,894	31.3%	2,494	26.7%	32.3%	9.0	$13,454	30.4%	10.6%
Twiggs	*	10,590	55.6%	43.6%	0.3%	0.5%	1.1%	27.0%	11.3%	1,710	18.5%	2,535	26.0%	2,053	19.7%	35.6%	8.3	$14,259	58.5%	10.3%
Union		17,289	98.6%	0.8%	0.4%	0.4%	0.9%	20.0%	21.8%	2,433	26.2%	2,152	18.3%	2,113	12.5%	25.6%	3.2	$18,845	13.8%	6.6%
Upson		27,597	71.0%	28.1%	0.5%	0.4%	1.2%	26.5%	14.2%	3,322	13.0%	3,794	14.7%	3,990	14.7%	33.2%	7.0	$17,052	18.8%	10.9%
Walker		61,053	95.2%	4.0%	0.4%	0.5%	0.9%	24.8%	13.8%	6,899	12.3%	7,326	12.8%	7,486	12.5%	33.2%	4.3	$15,867	16.1%	7.8%
Walton		60,687	83.9%	14.7%	0.9%	0.6%	1.6%	26.4%	9.6%	5,225	16.9%	5,024	13.2%	5,829	9.7%	25.5%	3.4	$19,470	11.6%	6.5%
Ware	*	35,483	70.2%	28.3%	0.6%	1.1%	1.5%	24.8%	15.4%	7,666	21.1%	7,119	21.1%	6,823	20.5%	23.7%	6.4	$14,384	21.3%	7.8%
Warren	*	6,336	39.9%	59.7%	0.2%	0.4%	0.8%	26.4%	16.1%	1,824	28.3%	1,942	32.6%	1,687	27.0%	42.9%	8.4	$14,022	35.2%	9.9%
Washington	*	21,176	46.0%	53.5%	0.4%	0.3%	0.8%	26.9%	12.6%	4,717	25.3%	4,029	21.6%	4,543	22.9%	31.7%	8.5	$15,565	29.5%	13.4%

POVERTY-RELATED DATA BY COUNTY

U.S. Census Bureau

		2000 Total Population	Percent of Total Population: 2000 White	African Amer	Asians	Other	Hispanic	Age 0-17	Age 65+	Population Living Below Poverty Level 1980 #	1980 %	1990 #	1990 %	2000 #	2000 %	2000 Adults No H.S. Ed	2003 Une. Rate	2000 Per Capita Income	2000 % Mobile Home	% Low Weight Births
Wayne	*	26,565	77.5%	20.8%	0.6%	1.8%	3.8%	26.9%	11.4%	4,069	20.2%	4,596	21.2%	4,071	16.7%	29.9%	5.0	$16,626	32.6%	8.1%
Webster	*	2,390	51.3%	47.1%	0.0%	1.8%	2.8%	26.2%	14.8%	724	31.0%	537	22.5%	459	19.3%	38.7%	7.5	$14,772	37.5%	6.7%
Wheeler	*	6,179	64.9%	33.5%	0.3%	1.5%	3.5%	22.4%	12.7%	1,549	30.4%	1,463	30.3%	1,289	25.3%	32.1%	5.0	$13,005	31.6%	6.7%
White		19,944	96.2%	2.3%	0.6%	0.8%	1.6%	23.2%	14.6%	1,566	16.4%	1,575	12.5%	2,042	10.5%	24.0%	2.6	$17,193	22.7%	6.8%
Whitfield		83,525	82.7%	4.2%	1.1%	13.2%	22.1%	27.3%	10.3%	7,775	11.9%	7,986	11.1%	9,494	11.5%	37.0%	3.6	$18,515	17.4%	6.0%
Wilcox	*	8,577	62.9%	36.4%	0.2%	0.6%	1.6%	22.8%	13.5%	2,266	30.4%	1,944	28.6%	1,486	21.0%	31.8%	4.9	$14,014	31.9%	7.5%
Wilkes	*	10,687	55.9%	43.4%	0.3%	0.7%	2.0%	24.0%	17.1%	2,244	20.6%	2,365	22.6%	1,842	17.5%	35.0%	4.4	$15,020	24.7%	9.5%
Wilkinson	*	10,220	58.4%	41.1%	0.2%	0.7%	1.0%	27.2%	13.1%	1,823	17.6%	1,554	15.3%	1,815	17.9%	29.6%	8.7	$14,656	34.1%	11.1%
Worth	*	21,967	69.2%	29.7%	0.3%	0.7%	1.1%	28.6%	12.0%	4,262	23.7%	5,142	26.2%	4,060	18.5%	31.7%	7.2	$15,856	37.8%	9.4%
Georgia		8,186,453	66.1%	29.2%	2.4%	2.8%	5.3%	26.5%	9.6%	684,363	16.6%	923,085	14.7%	1,033,793	13.0%	21.4%	5.5	$21,154	12.0%	6.6%

* Persistent Poverty county.

Note: Above data are also available on the study's website, *www.cviog.uga.edu/poverty/*.

APPENDICES

Listed below are additional related resources that can be accessed on the study's website, *www.cviog.uga.edu/poverty.*

Appendix A: Principal Project Team, Study on Persistent Poverty in the South

Appendix B: Study on Persistent Poverty in the South, Georgia Maps

Appendix C: Georgia Rural Development Council Maps

Appendix D: An Economic Analysis of Georgia's Persistent Poverty Counties

Appendix E: Persistently Poor Counties in Georgia: Closing the Gap

NOTES

1 Booker T. Washington. *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography* (1965, original 1901). New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company.

2 Report and all related appendices can be found in the poverty study section of the website for the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia, *www.cviog.uga.edu/poverty.*

3 According to the 2000 U.S. Census, DP-1 data, the total population was 7,528,185.

4 1950,1990, and 2000 U.S. Census data.

5 Georgia Department of Natural Resources: *www.dnr.state.ga.us.*

6 From the 2001 *Georgia Farm Gate Value Report* published by the Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development at the University of Georgia.

7 From the Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development at the University of Georgia's website, *www.agecon.uga.edu/~caed/sectoranalysis.pdf.*

8 From *Snapshots* published by the Georgia Center for Non-Profits.

9 From the University System of Georgia Board of Regents website, *www.usg.edu.*

10 2000 U.S. Census, DP-1 data.

11 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census data.

12 U.S. Census Bureau: Current Population Survey, 1999.

13 This quartile methodology was adapted from Wimberley and Morris, *The Southern Black Belt*, 1997.

14 Mississippi Delta Regional Authority counties in Alabama are not contiguous with the rest of the Delta Region and are included in the proposed region. Additional criteria were developed for metro counties based on U.S. Census Bureau categories of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs).

- All persistently poor contiguous counties from MSAs in categories D (50,000 to 99,999) and C (100,000 to 249,999) were included in the region.
- Only persistent poverty contiguous counties from category B (250,000 to 999,999) that were not identified as central counties OR had populations under 50,000 were included in the region.
- All counties from category A (1,000,000 +) were excluded from the region.

15 2000 U.S. Census, DP-3 data.

16 Low birth weight babies refer to births less than 2500 grams. Source: National Vital Statistics System, National Center for Health Statistics, and obtained from the Area Resource File (Quality Resource Systems, Inc., Fairfax, VA).

17 2000 U.S. Census, DP-2 data.

18 The Human Capital Vitality Index for Adults, commissioned by the Georgia Rural Development Council, classifies Georgia's 159 counties from best to worst as Vibrant, Strong, Average, Weak, and Distressed, based on the social condition indicators of crime, literacy, health status, and food stamp participation.

19 The Human Capital Vitality Index for Youth and Children, commissioned by the Georgia Rural Development Council, classifies Georgia's 159 counties from best to worst as Vibrant, Strong, Average, Weak, and Distressed, based on the social condition indicators of juvenile arrests, high school dropouts, child mortality, and teen pregnancy.

20 2000 U.S. Census, DP-3 data.

21 The Economic Vitality Index, commissioned by the Georgia Rural Development Council, classifies Georgia's 159 counties from best to worst as Rapidly Developing, Developing, Existing & Emerging Growth Centers, Declining Rural, and Lagging Rural, based on employment growth, average wage growth, population growth, unemployment and poverty rates, and per capita income.

22 The fiscal capacity index, commissioned by the Georgia Rural Development Council, measures the ability of a jurisdiction to raise revenue. Sales tax, property tax, licenses, permits, fees, service charges, and other tax revenues are included in determining a jurisdiction's fiscal capacity. Assuming the state average fiscal capacity is 100 percent, a fiscal capacity of 100 percent or less is lower than the state average, and a fiscal capacity of 100 percent or more is better than the state average.

23 From *Georgia County Snapshots* published by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

24 Based on Adult Education Attainment 2000 data included on the County Fact Sheets developed by the Family Connection Partnership.

25 *www.ruralgeorgia.org.*

26 Southern Growth Policy Board, Carol Conway and Jim Clinton. *The Mercedes and the Magnolia: Preparing the Southern Workforce for the Next Economy* (2002). *http://www.southern.org/pubs/magnolia/magnolia.shtml.*

27 Southern Growth Policy Board Report distributed at annual conference held June 9-11, 2002, in Hilton Head, South Carolina. *Human Capital Strategies for the Next Economy: Best Practices from the South.*

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