

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR GEORGIA BUYERS

Your Georgia Dream Homebuying Guide

See how down payment assistance may help, check your readiness, and follow a clear seven-step path toward the keys.

Compare assistance options

Use the eligibility checklist

Build your buyer action plan

Ready for a personal game plan?
Text “DREAM” to 404-913-0319

Nina Guyton

START HERE

Georgia Dream can lower the upfront hurdle

A quick overview of the program before you talk with a participating lender.

The Georgia Dream Homeownership Program pairs an eligible 30-year fixed first mortgage with down payment assistance for qualified buyers purchasing a primary residence in Georgia.

SECOND MORTGAGE

0%

Interest on Georgia Dream down payment assistance.

MONTHLY PAYMENT

$0

The assistance is deferred, so there is no monthly payment on the second mortgage.

FIRST MORTGAGE

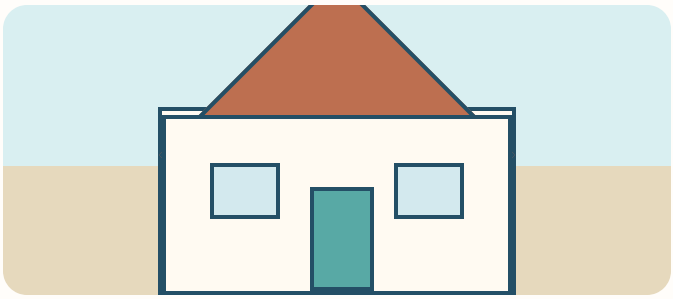
30 yr

Fixed-rate options may include FHA, VA, USDA, or conventional financing.

What “deferred” means

The assistance is not a monthly bill, but it is also not free cash. It is a second mortgage that generally becomes due when the home is sold, refinanced, or no longer used as your primary residence. Your lender will explain the exact repayment terms before closing.

> **Important:** Program funds, interest rates, income limits, sales price limits, and lender guidelines can change. Confirm current details before making an offer.



Georgia Dream is designed for owner-occupied primary residences, not investment properties or vacation homes.

The smart first move

Talk with a Georgia Dream participating lender before shopping seriously. Prequalification helps you understand your buying range, estimated cash needed, and which assistance option may fit.

QUICK SCREEN

Do you look like a promising candidate?

Check each statement that sounds like you.
A lender makes the final decision.

Core readiness checklist

- [ ] I plan to buy and occupy a primary residence in Georgia.
- [ ] I have not owned and occupied a primary residence in the last three years, or I may qualify for an allowed exception.
- [ ] My household income appears to fit the current county and household-size limit.
- [ ] My credit score is around 640 or higher. Manufactured homes generally require at least 660.
- [ ] I can contribute at least $1,000 toward the transaction.
- [ ] I am willing to complete required homebuyer education.
- [ ] My liquid assets after closing should be no more than $20,000 or 20% of the sales price, whichever is greater.

Three assistance paths

STANDARD

Up to $10,000

5% of the purchase price or $10,000, whichever is less, for an eligible buyer.

PEN

Up to $12,500

6% of the purchase price or $12,500, whichever is less, for eligible Protectors, Educators, Nurses and qualifying related occupations.

CHOICE

Up to $12,500

6% of the purchase price or $12,500, whichever is less, when an eligible disability exists in the household.

First-time buyer does not always mean your first home ever. For the Standard program, the key test is generally whether you owned and occupied a primary residence during the prior three years. Certain targeted-area and veteran exceptions may apply.

YOUR ROADMAP

Seven moves take you from curious to closing

Do the early work in order so you can shop with confidence.

1 Define a comfortable payment

Start with what works for your monthly life, not the maximum approval amount.

2 Gather your financial documents

Prepare income, asset, tax, identity, and employment records. Explain large deposits early.

3 Choose a participating lender

Ask for a Georgia Dream review and compare the full payment, cash to close, and fees.

4 Complete homebuyer education

Finish the approved course or counseling path your lender confirms.

5 Shop within the approved range

Focus on homes that fit program property rules and your true budget.

6 Make a clean, informed offer

Coordinate your agent and lender so financing timelines are reflected in the contract.

7 Clear underwriting and close

Respond quickly to document requests, avoid new debt, review final figures, and get your keys.

Protect your approval

Before closing, avoid opening new credit, financing a car or furniture, moving money without a paper trail, or changing jobs without first asking your lender.

Questions worth asking your lender

- Which Georgia Dream option fits me?
- What is my estimated total cash to close?
- What payment includes taxes and insurance?
- What income and sales-price limits apply?
- When would the assistance be repaid?
- What could change my approval?

BUYER WORKBOOK

Turn “someday” into a real starting point

Fill this page out before your lender and buyer consultation.

My homebuying picture

IDEAL MOVE DATE

PREFERRED AREAS

HOUSEHOLD SIZE

TARGET MONTHLY HOUSING PAYMENT

ESTIMATED CREDIT SCORE RANGE

MUST-HAVE HOME FEATURES

My available funds

Checking and savings	
Expected gift funds	
Other available funds	
Less: emergency reserve	
Estimated amount available	

Do not move or deposit funds solely to improve these numbers without speaking with your lender. Funds used in a mortgage transaction may need to be documented.

Document starter list

- [ ] Government-issued photo identification
- [ ] Recent pay stubs covering 30 days
- [ ] Recent bank statements covering 30 days
- [ ] W-2s and requested tax records
- [ ] Employment and residence history
- [ ] Statements for debts and other assets

My top three questions

1.

2.

3.

Self-employed or variable income? Start the lender conversation early. Overtime, commissions, bonuses, and business income often require extra documentation and review.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

Yes - Georgia Dream can work with a new home

The home, financing, and builder timeline all have to fit the program.

Georgia Dream permits eligible one-unit detached and attached homes. A newly built home can qualify when the buyer meets program rules and the property meets the requirements of the selected FHA, VA, USDA, or conventional first mortgage.

Line up the lender before the lot

Use a Georgia Dream participating lender from the start. If the builder offers incentives through a preferred lender, ask whether that lender participates in Georgia Dream and request a side-by-side estimate of the total payment, cash to close, and fees.

Build the contract around the timeline

DCA's July 8, 2026 matrix says a funds reservation lasts a maximum of 75 calendar days, including compliance underwriting through disbursement. The lender should decide when to reserve based on the expected completion and closing dates.

Four checkpoints before you sign

1. **Buyer**
   Confirm income, credit, first-time buyer status or exception, education, minimum contribution, and available assets.
2. **Home**
   Confirm the base price plus upgrades stays within the current sales-price limit and your approved budget.
3. **Loan**
   Make sure the property type and final condition satisfy both Georgia Dream and the chosen first-mortgage program.
4. **Closing**
   Coordinate the builder, agent, lender, appraisal, title, insurance, and final documents so the loan can close on time.

Ask these questions at the builder's sales center

- Does the preferred lender participate in Georgia Dream?
- Which incentives apply if I use another lender?
- What is the realistic completion window?
- How are upgrades and deposits documented?
- What happens if construction is delayed?
- When will the lender reserve program funds?

Important: New construction does not waive Georgia Dream rules. The buyer must intend to occupy the home as a primary residence within 60 days after closing, and the lender must confirm the property and transaction are eligible.

Program facts: Georgia DCA Standard Matrix and Lender Certification SF-60, both version July 8, 2026. Builder timing and incentives vary by community.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Answers first. Then a home search built around you.

Use these quick answers, then request a personal Georgia Dream game plan.

Is the assistance a grant?

No. Georgia Dream down payment assistance is a deferred, zero-interest second mortgage. Ask your lender when repayment would be triggered.

Can I use it for an investment property?

No. The home must be your primary residence and meet current program property rules.

Does a 640 score guarantee approval?

No. The score is one requirement. Income, debts, assets, property eligibility, loan guidelines, and underwriting all matter.

Can I pick any lender?

You need a participating Georgia Dream lender to reserve funds and process the program.

PERSONAL BUYER PLAN

Let's find out what your next move could be.

Get a no-pressure conversation about your timing, preferred area, home goals, and the steps to become purchase-ready.

Text "DREAM" to 404-913-0319

Nina Guyton
Associate Broker / REALTOR®

Your dream deserves a clear plan.

Official program sources

1. Georgia Department of Community Affairs, *Georgia Dream Standard Matrix*, version July 8, 2026. http://dca.georgia.gov/document/resources/georgia-dream-standard-matrix/download
2. Georgia Department of Community Affairs, *Georgia Dream Homeownership Program Flyer*. https://dca.georgia.gov/document/fact-sheets/georgia-dream-homeownership-program-flyer-english/download
3. Georgia Department of Community Affairs, *Realtor Georgia Dream Flyer*. https://dca.georgia.gov/document/flyer/realtor-georgia-dream-flyer-english/download
4. Georgia Housing and Finance Authority, *Georgia Dream Lender Certification (SF-60)*, version July 8, 2026. https://dca.georgia.gov/document/forms/sf-60-lender-certification/download

Program disclaimer: This guide is educational and is not a commitment to lend, a guarantee of eligibility, or financial, tax, or legal advice. Program terms and availability are subject to change. A participating lender must confirm current requirements, approve credit, and determine eligibility. Equal Housing Opportunity.