

Downtown Development Authorities

O.C.G.A Title 36 Chapter 42

Downtown Development Authorities (DDA) are used in cities throughout the state of Georgia to revitalize and redevelop municipal central business districts. A DDA is a type of public corporation, a separate legal entity known as a Statutory DDA.

They have been created by the General Assembly in every city in the state of Georgia. However, authorities cannot transact business or exercise powers until activated by adopting and filling a resolution. The resolution must declare the need for the authority, specify the boundaries of the downtown development area that constitutes the central business district and appoint the initial directors. Authorities are required to register annually with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

The Authority must be annually audited in the city's annual audit. It must also complete an annual report of local government authority finances with DCA. They are eligible to apply for and receive state loans and grants and to be a conduit of such funds to the private sector. OCGA 36-42-8 lists the general powers of DDAs. They can own, acquire and improve property, and may enter into contracts and intergovernmental agreements. They may contract with a government entity for a maximum of 50 years through an intergovernmental agreement.

A DDA consists of a board of seven directors who are appointed by the municipal governing authority to serve staggered four-year term. The initial Board appointments are two members for six years, two members for four years, and three members for two years. At least four of the members must have business interest in the district and live in the city or in the county. One of the directors can be a member of the city council with terms running concurrently. One director may also live outside the county, if they own a business within the district. Board members do not receive any compensation but are reimbursed for actual expenses incurred in performing their duties.

Board members must take at least eight hours of training on downtown development and redevelopment programs within the first 12 months of their appointment to the DDA. The Board of Directors adopts Bylaws consistent with the law. They elect officers: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and a Treasurer or Secretary-Treasurer.

Authorities are required by law to observe the open meetings and open records acts of Georgia, as well as the state code of ethics. This means public meetings where a quorum is gathered, proper notice of all meetings and meeting summaries, a copy of all minutes are available for public review.

The Authority is generally covered under the city's liability policy as a corporate board and as individuals carrying out board duties.

The geographical jurisdiction of the Authority (downtown development area) may be amended by the City.