

REVISING AN EXISTING SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY

Local governments are encouraged to keep their Service Delivery Strategy accurate and up to date in order to efficiently and effectively address the service delivery needs of their citizens. Counties and their cities: (1) **should** complete periodic updates/revisions to specific portions of an existing Service Delivery Strategy so it will always be current and reflect locally preferred service delivery arrangements; and (2) **must** complete an update of their entire Strategy under certain conditions outlined in the law. In accordance with section 36-70-28 of the Service Delivery Strategy law, local strategies must be reviewed and completely updated if any of the following six conditions are met:

- In conjunction with a local government updating its comprehensive plan;
- Whenever necessary in order to change service delivery or revenue distribution arrangements;
- Whenever necessary due to changes in revenue distribution arrangements;
- In the event of the creation, abolition, or consolidation of local governments (including first time cross –county annexations by cities);
- When the existing service delivery strategy agreement expires; or
- Whenever the county and affected municipalities agree to revise the strategy.

If any of these six conditions occur in a county, the local governments in that county are responsible for: (1) reviewing their entire strategy; (2) revising any portion of the strategy necessary to reflect the “new” preferred service delivery arrangements; (3) getting the updated strategy approved and signed by the local governments required to approve and adopt the revisions to the strategy; and (4) forwarding a copy of the updated/revised portion(s) of the strategy to DCA for review and verification in accordance

with the requirements of state law. Failure of a county and its cities to update its strategy in accordance with the six requirements identified above may result in DCA revoking its verification of a local strategy, thereby causing the sanctions identified in section 36-70-27(a) of the law to be imposed on all local governments and authorities in the county. Listed below is more detailed guidance for meeting these requirements, including steps to take even if a review of the existing strategy is completed and no changes are warranted as a result of the review.

Reviewing an Existing Strategy

The county government, all city governments in the county, and all local authorities in the county should carefully review the existing Service Delivery Strategy, including a detailed review of the “Summary of Service Delivery Arrangements” (FORM 2) for each service included in the existing Strategy. The review should ensure that the information on this form is correct, current and represents the preferred future service delivery arrangements for that local service.

In reviewing an existing local service or a proposed new service or service expansion, local officials should look beyond current arrangements and **agree on the preferred way each service will operate in the future** [e. g., service provider(s), service area(s), funding source(s), etc.]. This review should apply to all services provided by local governments and authorities in the county. Remember, the provisions in your Service Delivery Strategy will be used by state agencies to guide the consistency of state financial and permitting assistance throughout your county, so it is important that your strategy reflect the locally agreed upon preferences for both the near and long term.

Also, please remember that if any service being revised/updated has more than one local provider, and the agreed upon service areas of these providers do not follow jurisdictional boundaries (i.e., city

limits or county boundaries), a map clearly identifying the separate service areas in the county of all these local service providers is also required.

As part of a strategy update, local governments must also review all the local agreements (e.g., land use/annexation dispute resolution, extra-territorial water/sewer rates, etc.) that are required parts of their local strategy to ensure these agreements are complete, up to date and meet the agreed upon needs of the participating entities. If revisions to these items are needed, the revised copies of each agreement must be furnished to the appropriate local governments and to DCA.

If any local government or authority in the county is proposing to start a new local service not included in the existing Strategy, the new service must be included in the updated Strategy (prepare an ‘new’ FORM 2 and a revised FORM 1 for such a service). If a service is to be consolidated, these new arrangements must also be accounted for in the updated Strategy (prepare a revised FORM 2 that identifies these new arrangements).

For each local service, all accompanying maps, resolutions, intergovernmental agreements or other narrative materials included in the strategy must be reviewed to make sure all these documents are accurate, clear and reflect the preferred service delivery arrangements for each service. Any supporting contracts, intergovernmental agreements, etc., that are part of a particular local service agreement must also be current.

If changes in the Existing Strategy are needed:

1. A new “Summary of Service Delivery Arrangements” (FORM 2) needs to be prepared only for those local services that are being revised, changed, or added. If local agreements/contracts supporting

portions of a local strategy are also being revised, these revised agreements should also be included in the revised/updated strategy (and submitted to DCA). **Local governments should retain for themselves (and forward to DCA) only the portion(s) of their strategy that is being changed.**

2. Only the revised portion(s) of an existing local Strategy, including all revised “Summary of Service Delivery Arrangements” (FORM 2s), supporting agreements/contracts, service delivery maps, if applicable, must be approved and adopted by resolution by the local governing authorities (e.g., city council or county commission) of each local government required to approve and adopt an amendment to the Strategy. In addition, each of these local governments must authorize their representatives to sign the updated “Certifications” page that will accompany the revised portion(s) of the existing Strategy to DCA. If a local strategy is being extended, then a FORM 5 “Certifications for Extending an SDS” should be used.

3. A new “Certifications” page must be signed and dated by authorized representatives of all local governments required to approve and adopt an amendment to the Strategy. These include, at a minimum, the county government, the county seat city government, all city governments in the county with a 2000 population of over 9,000 residing in the county, and no less than 50% of all other cities with a 2000 population of between 500 and 9,000 residing within the county (O.C.G.A. 36-70-25).

Once the revisions to the local Strategy have been approved by resolution by the required local governments, and the updated “Certifications” page has been signed and dated by their authorized representatives, a copy of these revisions to the strategy must be provided to every local government (and authority) in the county. Because the Service Delivery Strategy itself is an intergovernmental agreement (i.e., a contract), it is important that each city government, the county government and any other local

entities that are party to the strategy receive copies with original signatures. A complete copy of all revisions to the updated Strategy must also be forwarded to DCA. **Note:** DCA prefers an electronic (scanned) copy showing the original signatures; however, clear photocopy will suffice.

DCA will review the revised portion(s) of the updated Strategy and advise all local governments in the county on its completeness, clarity, etc. Once the revised portion(s) of the Strategy is verified, these portion(s) will replace their counterparts in the existing strategy on file at DCA. DCA and other state agencies will then use the updated Strategy in making the “Service Delivery Strategy consistency evaluation” (O.C.G.A. 36-70-27 [a]) required for state financial or permit assistance.

If no change in the Existing Strategy is needed:

1. The existing strategy must be re-adopted by the governing authority (e.g., city council or county commission) of each local government that is agreeing to continue all of the provisions of the existing strategy. In addition, each of these local governments will need to authorize its representative to sign the FORM 5 that indicates there are no proposed changes in the existing strategy. On the FORM 5, select the appropriate month/day and enter the year for the expiration of the SDS.
2. The FORM 5 must be signed and dated by authorized representatives of each local government required to approve and adopt the strategy (O.C.G.A. 36-70-25), in order to document the re-adoption.
3. The signed and dated FORM 5 must be forwarded to DCA to document that the existing strategy was reviewed and the required local governments chose to re-adopt it with no

changes. **Note:** DCA prefers an electronic (scanned) copy with the original signatures; however, a clear photocopy will suffice.

DCA will review the signed and dated FORM 5, and assuming it has the required local government signatures, the department will notify every local government in the county that its Service Delivery Strategy remains verified in accordance with the requirements of state law. The current Service Delivery Strategy will continue to be used by DCA and other state agencies in making the “Service Delivery Strategy consistency evaluation” (O.C.G.A. 36-70-27[a]) required for state financial or permit assistance.