

# Senior Rental Challenges

**Approximately 63% of DeKalb County renters age 65+ pay more than 30% of their income on housing. Housing is considered affordable if a person pays no more than 30% of their income on rent.**

## Older Adults in DeKalb County

As of 2017, DeKalb County was home to 90,476 adults age 65 or older, or 12% of the total population.<sup>3</sup> 49,832 housing units in DeKalb County are headed by a person 65+, and of these, 12,095 are rental units.<sup>1</sup>

By 2040, the population of older adults in the metro Atlanta region is forecasted to more than double from the current levels.<sup>2</sup>

## Rentals are Costly

Median monthly rent in DeKalb County is:<sup>3</sup>

- \$984/month for a 1-bedroom
- \$1,110/month for a 2-bedroom

## Cost of Living in DeKalb County

The average median household income of people age 65+ in DeKalb County is 21% lower than for all ages.<sup>1</sup> And almost one in three people 65+ have annual incomes of less than \$23,512, which is considered very low income compared to the median income of \$55,876 in DeKalb County.<sup>1</sup>

The chart below demonstrates the challenges of an individual 65+ living on the average mean social security income in DeKalb County of \$17,746 per year.<sup>1,4</sup>

	Monthly
<b>Average Finances for DeKalb County Person Age 65+ with Average Social Security Income of \$17,746/Year</b>	
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$1,478.83</b>
<b>Basic Living Expenses</b>	
1-Bedroom Median Rent (DeKalb County)	\$984.00
Food and Beverages	\$508.33
Transportation	\$609.67
Apparel, Personal Care Products, and Services	\$140.08
Healthcare**	\$493.25
Life and Other Personal Insurance	\$207.58
<b>Remainder of Income for Other Expenses*</b>	<b>-\$1,464.08</b>

\* An average person age 65+ in the South actually spends \$516.33 on "other" expenses, which can include emergencies, home supplies, entertainment, etc.

\*\*Healthcare includes health insurance, medical services, drugs, and medical supplies.

## Affordable Housing is Limited

Of the 123,001 total units for rent in DeKalb County, only 13.9%, or 17,141 units, of any size (studio, 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, and 3+ bedrooms) cost under \$750 a month – not nearly enough to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, given that two in five (or 40% of) renters age 65+ in DeKalb County do not have access to a vehicle, and 16.37% of all renters do not have access to a vehicle, there is a need for rental housing to be located near services and transportation options.<sup>1</sup>

## LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Policies must be implemented that encourage the development of a mix of housing types within existing communities, at a variety of price points. Zoning regulations should be written to allow homes to be built in close proximity to the services that enable people to remain independent as they age.

- » Does your city/county provide incentives (e.g., tax breaks, fee-waivers) to encourage the development of affordable and supportive housing units?
- » Do your city's and/or county's zoning regulations allow for a diversity of housing types and options (e.g. secondary units on one property)?
- » Do your city's and/or county's development codes encourage universal design elements (e.g., no step entries, wider doorways) to allow for a diversity of housing types and options?
- » Does your city/county permit access to basic services within walking distance of residences?
- » Does your community require a certain percentage of new housing developments to include affordable units?

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau 2017 American Community Survey five year estimates for 2013-2017.

<sup>2</sup> Atlanta Regional Commission population projections.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau 2017 American Community Survey one year estimates. Rent is the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, and water and sewer) and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.). Gross rent is intended to eliminate differentials that result from varying practices with respect to the inclusion of utilities and fuels as part of the rental payment.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey 2016-2017, average annual and expenditures and characteristics for person age 65 and older living in South region of United States.

## Contact information

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