Nearly 30 percent of Georgia’s counties were housing stress counties in 2000; this is 70 percent higher than the national rate of 17 percent. Compared to all Georgia counties, housing stress counties in Georgia were more likely to have low education rates, low employment rates, and be in persistent poverty. Housing stress counties and counties statewide had the same likelihood of being metropolitan or nonmetropolitan.

The proportion of Georgia counties that were housing stress counties in 2000 was 70 percent higher than the national rate. Counties were classified as “housing stress” if 30 percent or more of households had one or more of these housing conditions in 2000: lacked complete plumbing, lacked complete kitchen, paid 30 percent or more of income for owner costs or rent (cost-burdened), or had more than one person per room (overcrowded). Nearly 30 percent (46 of 159) of Georgia’s counties were housing stress counties, compared to 17 percent (537 of 3,141) of counties nationwide.

Georgia’s housing stress counties were equally likely than counties statewide to be located in metropolitan areas, 43 percent (20 of 46) and 44 percent (70 of 159), respectively. [See attached map.] One-half (seven of 14) of the central urban counties were housing stressed: Chatham, Clarke, Dougherty, Fulton, Hall, Lowndes, and Richmond counties. Bibb, Floyd, Glynn, Houston, Liberty, Muscogee, and Whitfield counties were not considered housing stress counties. Every county in the Valdosta MSA was classified as housing stress.

Fifty-seven percent (26 of 46) of Georgia’s housing stress counties were nonmetropolitan counties. There were four groups of at least four contiguous nonmetropolitan counties that were housing stressed. The largest of these groups was located between Augusta and Savannah and includes Bulloch, Candler, Emanuel, Evans, Jenkins, Screven, and Tattnall counties. The other three groups each contain four

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1 All data compiled from the 2004 County Typology Codes, Economic Research Service, USDA, Internet release date: May 2004.
2 It is likely that the majority of housing stressed counties were classified as such because households were cost burdened, since the percentage of households exhibiting the other previously mentioned housing conditions were probably significantly lower than 30 percent. In terms of other important indicators of housing conditions, these data do not identify areas with old housing stocks, which may be in need of repair. These data also do not isolate counties with dilapidated and run down housing and neighborhoods.
counties; they were Greene, Hancock, Warren, and Washington counties to the west of Augusta and south of Athens; Crisp, Dooly, Sumter, and Turner counties south of Macon and north of Albany; and Colquitt, Cook, Grady, and Mitchell counties south of Albany and north of Valdosta.

The housing stress counties were more likely than counties statewide to have low education rates, 70 percent (32 of 46) and 53 percent (84 of 159), respectively. Counties were classified as “low education” if 25 percent or more of residents 25-64 years old had neither a high school diploma nor GED in 2000.

Housing stress counties were more likely than counties statewide to have low employment rates, 26 percent (12 of 46 counties) and 16 percent (26 of 159 counties), respectively. Counties were classified as “low employment” if less than 65 percent of residents 21-64 years old were employed in 2000.

Housing stress counties were more likely than counties statewide to be classified as having persistent poverty, 59 percent (27 of 46 counties) and 31 percent (50 of 159 counties), respectively. Counties were classified as “persistent poverty” if 20 percent or more of residents were poor as measured by each of the last four censuses, 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

As identified by these data, seven Georgia counties have poor housing and poor economic conditions. Specifically, Burke, Clay, Greene, Hancock, Talbot, Terrell, and Warren counties were classified as housing stress, low education, low employment, and persistent poverty.
Housing stress counties: 30 percent or more of households had one or more of these housing conditions in 2000: lacked complete plumbing, lacked complete kitchen, paid 30 percent or more of income for owner costs or rent, or had more than 1 person per room.