

**§ 12-3-56. Revitalization of central business districts; government presence in historic districts**

(a) As used in this Code section, the term "division" means the Division of Historic Preservation of the department.

(b) The General Assembly recognizes that the State of Georgia has undertaken various efforts to revitalize the central business districts and in-town areas of municipalities in this state which have historically served as the centers for growth, commerce, and government in our metropolitan areas. Accordingly, the General Assembly reaffirms the commitment to strengthen those municipalities by encouraging the location of state facilities in central business districts. The General Assembly also reaffirms the commitment to provide leadership in the preservation of historic resources and to acquire and utilize space in suitable buildings of historic, architectural, or cultural significance. To this end, the state agencies shall utilize and maintain, wherever operationally appropriate and economically prudent, historic properties and districts, especially those located in central business areas. When implementing these policies, state agencies shall institute practices and procedures that are sensible, understandable, and compatible with current authority and that impose the least burden on, and provide the maximum benefit to, society.

(c) Whenever operationally appropriate and economically prudent, when locating state facilities, state agencies shall give first consideration to historic properties within historic districts. If no such property is suitable, then state agencies shall consider other developed or undeveloped sites within historic districts. State agencies shall then consider historic properties outside of historic districts, if no suitable site within a district exists. Any rehabilitation or construction that is undertaken pursuant to this order must be architecturally compatible with the character of the surrounding historic district or properties. County, city, and other local governmental agencies are also encouraged to conform to this subsection.

(d) State agencies with responsibilities for leasing, acquiring, locating, maintaining, or managing state facilities or with responsibilities for the planning for, or managing of, historic resources shall take steps to reform, streamline, and otherwise minimize regulation, policies, and procedures that impede the state government's ability to establish or maintain a presence in historic districts or to acquire historic properties to satisfy state space needs, unless such regulations, policies, and procedures are designed to protect human health and safety or the environment. State agencies are encouraged to seek the assistance of the division when taking these steps.

(e) In implementation of this part, the division and each state agency shall seek appropriate partnerships with local governments, Indian tribes, and appropriate private organizations with the goal of enhancing participation of these parties in the state historic preservation program. Such partnerships should embody the principles of administrative flexibility, reduced paperwork, and increased service to the public.

(f) This Code section is not intended to create, nor does it create, any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the State of Georgia, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-3-56, enacted by Ga. L. 1998, p. 1037, § 1.