

The Riverdale DPA Pathway

Smart Home Financing Options for
First-Time Buyers & 55+ Homeowners in Metro Atlanta

You don't have to figure this out alone.
Let's find your pathway—together.

Johnnie Benton

Riverdale, GA Realtor® SRES® | DPA Strategy | Local Market Insight

Serving Riverdale, GA | 30274 & 30296 | First Time Buyer & 55+ Specialist

Before You Assume You Can't...

Most people walk through my door with the same assumption: they don't have enough money to buy a home. Too little saved, too much debt, not the right age, not the right income. They've talked themselves out of something before we've even had a real conversation.

Here's what I know after years of helping families right here in Riverdale: the down payment is rarely the whole story. There are programs built specifically for people in your situation — first-time buyers trying to get a foothold, seniors looking to rightsize without the burden of a big mortgage, families relocating who need a fast, smart start. This guide is your map. It lays out the real financing options available in Metro Atlanta, written in plain language so you can walk away with clarity — not confusion. No pressure. No jargon. Just the straight truth about what's possible and how we get there.

Read it. Sit with it. Then let's talk.

Who This Guide Is For



First-Time Buyers

Families & individuals entering homeownership for the first time, especially in Riverdale ZIP codes 30274 & 30296.



55+ Rightsizers

Seniors looking to downsize, simplify, or leverage equity from a current home to fund the next chapter.



Military Relocators

Service members and veterans relocating from DC, LA, or New York who need to move smart and move fast.

Down Payment Assistance (DPA)

Best For: First-Time Buyers & Qualifying 55+ Purchasers

What DPA Can Cover

- ✓ Down payment (typically 3%–5% of purchase price)
- ✓ Closing costs — often 2%–3% of the loan
- ✓ Pre-paid expenses (insurance, taxes, initial escrow)
- ✓ Gap funding between what you have and what you need
- ✓ No repayment required on many forgivable programs

Common Georgia DPA Programs

- ✓ Georgia Dream Homeownership Program (GDCA)
- ✓ Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership
- ✓ Clayton County HOME Investment Program
- ✓ USDA Rural Development Loans (select areas)
- ✓ Employer-Sponsored Assistance (see Page 4)

Typical Eligibility Requirements

- ✓ First-time buyer OR no ownership in last 3 years
- ✓ Household income within program limits (varies by county)
- ✓ Minimum credit score: 620–640 depending on program
- ✓ Completion of HUD-approved homebuyer education course
- ✓ Property must be primary residence

When DPA Makes the Most Sense

- You have stable income but haven't been able to save a large lump sum
- Your credit is solid but you're renting and feel stuck
- You want to preserve your cash reserves after closing
- You're a 55+ buyer downsizing without full equity access yet
- You're a veteran or active military member with limited liquid savings

Johnnie's Take

DPA isn't charity. It's a strategic tool. I help buyers get to the closing table with as little as \$1,000 out of pocket — and walk away as homeowners. The program does the rest. That's what knowing your options looks like.

Employer-Assisted Housing Programs

Many buyers don't realize their employer may already offer housing assistance — and it can be stacked with DPA programs for maximum impact.

What Employer-Assisted Housing (EAH) Can Include

- Forgivable or low-interest loans for down payment or closing costs
- Direct grants (no repayment required) from employer benefit programs
- Matching contributions — employer matches what you save
- Preferred lender partnerships with discounted rates or fees
- Relocation allowances that can be applied toward housing costs

When It Makes the Most Sense

- You're relocating for work (especially from high-cost metros like DC, LA, or New York)
- Your employer is a government agency, hospital, school district, or large corporation
- You're a federal or state employee — many have dedicated programs
- Your HR department offers a 'Housing Benefit' or 'Financial Wellness' component

Watch For

- Residency requirements — some EAH programs require staying in the area for 3-5 years
- Employment duration clauses — you may need 1-2 years with the employer before qualifying
- Property location restrictions — the home may need to be within a certain radius of work
- Tax implications — some employer grants are reported as taxable income

Pro Tip: Before our first meeting, check your employee benefits portal or ask your HR department directly: "Do we have any housing assistance programs?" You might be surprised what's already available to you.

Strategic Options for 55+ Homeowners

If you've owned a home before, you have more tools in your toolkit than you think. This section is written for those who've already built equity and want to use it wisely to fund what comes next.

Equity-Based Purchase Strategies (62+)

H4P — Home Equity Conversion Mortgage for Purchase

Age Requirement: 62+

- ✓ Buy a new home WITHOUT a monthly mortgage payment
- ✓ Use proceeds from your current home sale as your contribution
- ✓ FHA-insured — you retain title and ownership
- ✓ Remaining equity passes to heirs upon sale or passing
- ✓ Ideal for buyers who want to rightsize and reduce monthly obligations

The H4P is one of the most underused tools in senior real estate. It's not a "last resort" — it's a smart equity strategy.

Reverse Mortgage Purchase Strategy

Age Requirement: 62+ | Works best with significant equity

- ✓ Access equity from your current home to fund the down payment on a new one
- ✓ No monthly mortgage payments required on the reverse mortgage line
- ✓ Live in your new home with reduced financial pressure
- ✓ FHA-insured product — federally regulated consumer protections apply
- ✓ Requires independent HUD counseling before origination

This strategy works best with a lender who specializes in senior real estate finance. I can connect you with the right team.

Additional 55+ Considerations

- Bridge loans — short-term financing to buy before your current home sells
- Conventional loans with 5-10% down remain available regardless of age (age discrimination in lending is illegal)
- Senior-specific DPA programs may apply — income thresholds are often higher for 55+ buyers
- Georgia Dream offers a PEN (Protectors, Educators & Nurses) loan for qualifying seniors in public service roles

Financing Pathway Comparison

Side-by-side breakdown of your real home financing options in Riverdale & Metro Atlanta

Program	Best For	Payment Impact	Age Req.	Income Limits	Key Consideration
Georgia Dream DPA	First-Time Buyers	Reduces down payment	None	Yes — county limits	Must complete homebuyer education
Clayton County HOME	Low-mod income buyers	Covers closing costs	None	Yes — 80% AMI	Property must be in Clayton County
Employer-Assisted Housing	Relocating employees	Grant or loan from employer	None	Varies by employer	Residency & tenure requirements may apply
H4P (HECM for Purchase)	55+ Rightsizers	No monthly mortgage	62+	None	Primary residence; HUD counseling required
Reverse Mortgage Strategy	Equity-rich seniors	Access equity, no payment	62+	None	Reduces estate equity; FHA-regulated
USDA & VA Home Loans	Rural buyers / Veterans	Zero down possible	None	Yes — geographic/VA req.	Eligible area or VA entitlement required

Program guidelines, income limits, and property eligibility requirements may change. Always verify details with a licensed lender and your Realtor® before making financing decisions.

Community & Faith-Based Housing Support

Sometimes housing support doesn't come from a government program or corporate HR department — it comes from your community. Faith-based organizations and local nonprofits have helped families access homeownership for generations.

What These Programs Can Offer

- Smallhousing grants
- Matched savings programs
- Low-interest private assistance
- Benevolence funds for families in genuine need

What May Be Required

- Active participation or membership
- Financial counseling sessions
- Budget transparency and review
- Ongoing involvement in community activities

Johnnie's Take

This isn't "free money." It's community-backed support with accountability. If you're connected to a faith organization or local nonprofit, ask what housing resources are available. You may already have support in your corner.

■ Ask Your Church or Mosque

Many congregations manage benevolence or housing assistance funds. Start with leadership and ask what programs may be available.

■ Contact Local Nonprofits

Habitat for Humanity, Community Development Corporations (CDCs), and United Way chapters may offer housing support programs.

■ Call 211

Georgia's 211 line connects you to local housing and assistance resources available in Clayton County.

Community-based programs work best when stacked with other assistance. Ask me how to layer these resources alongside DPA or employer assistance for maximum impact.

The Riverdale Reality

Riverdale isn't just where I work. It's home — and I want more families to be able to say that.

ZIP codes 30274 and 30296 sit in the heart of Clayton County, and they represent something real: a community where homeownership is still within reach. Median home prices remain below the Atlanta metro average, which means the programs outlined in this guide can stretch further here than almost anywhere else in the region.

The buyers I work with in Riverdale aren't looking for luxury. They're looking for stability. A yard. A school district. A neighborhood where they can set down roots and not worry about the next rent increase. That's not too much to ask — and with the right financing strategy, it's absolutely achievable.

Here's what the Riverdale market currently looks like for buyers who are ready to move:

Here's why these programs stretch further in Riverdale than in most of Metro Atlanta

Median Home Price
\$200K-\$250K

Well below Atlanta metro

Average Days on
Market
21-35 Days

Competitive but not
impossible

DPA Eligible Homes
Most listings

In 30274 & 30296 corridors

The window is open. The programs are funded. The market is ready. The only question is whether you're ready to take the first step — and that's exactly where I come in.

Ready to See What's Possible?




You've read the map. Now let's plan the route.

Book Your Free 15-Minute Financing Strategy Call

No pressure. No commitment. Just clarity.

SCAN ME



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Disclaimer

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Down Payment Assistance (DPA) programs, employer-assisted housing programs, HECM for Purchase (H4P) products, reverse mortgage instruments, USDA loans, VA home loans, and all other financing options referenced in this guide are administered by third-party lenders, government agencies, and program administrators. Eligibility determinations are made solely by those administering entities.

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Real estate market data referenced (median home prices, days on market, program availability) is based on general market observations current as of the time of publication and may not reflect current conditions. Buyers should consult current MLS data and a licensed lender for the most up-to-date information.

Reverse mortgage and H4P products are complex financial instruments. Prospective borrowers are strongly encouraged to complete independent HUD-approved counseling prior to proceeding. These products are not appropriate for every buyer.

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