



Criteria for Determining Group Homes

September 2018

Official definition per Chapter 134 of the Cobb County Code:

Group home means a dwelling unit, operated by an affiliate of a national, regional, state or county organization with a philanthropic mission, shared by four or fewer persons, excluding resident staff, who live together as a single housekeeping unit and in a long term, family-like environment in which staff persons provide care, education and participation in community activities, under a structured and scheduled plan that must be provided to the county, for the residents with the primary goal of enabling the residents to live as independently as possible in order to reach their maximum potential under the direction and guidance of a designated managing caregiver, designated as such by the affiliate organization, who must be a resident of the group home and available by telephone on a 24-hour basis in case of complaints. A copy of the home rules shall be provided to the county as well as (if applicable) evidence of active enforcement under the Georgia Association of Recovery Residence standards. The schedule of activities may be verified via periodic inspection by community development staff. The term "group home" shall not include a halfway house, a treatment center for alcoholism or drug abuse, a work release facility for convicts or ex-convicts, a home for the detention and/or rehabilitation of juveniles adjudged delinquent or unruly and placed in the custody of the state, or other housing facilities serving as an alternative to incarceration. The term "group home" shall also not allow the use of a dwelling as an apartment or duplex. A group home shall not allow use of the dwelling as a home for individuals on parole, probation, or convicted and released from incarceration, for any crimes including child molestation, aggravated child molestation, or child sexual abuse, as defined in O.C.G.A. § 16-6-4 or individuals required to register as sex offenders pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 42-1-12. A group home may include a home for the disabled. As used in this subsection, the term "disabled" shall mean:

1. Having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities;
2. Having a record of having such an impairment; or
3. Being regarded as having such an impairment.

However, "disabled" shall not include persons who currently use illegal controlled substances, persons who have been convicted of the illegal manufacture or distribution of controlled substances, sex offenders, and juvenile offenders or persons with or without disabilities who present a direct threat to the persons or property of others.

Halfway house shall mean any dwelling used as a residence by individuals on parole, probation, or serving a criminal sentence on condition of house arrest, for the purpose of rehabilitation of the individual while transitioning back into the community.

The following criteria (developed to support official definition as listed in the Cobb County Code of Ordinances) must be submitted to and approved by the Zoning Division prior to issuance of a business license for any residence to be used as a group home. In addition, Code Enforcement can request re-verification of all criteria every six months/semi-annually for the group home operation.

A business License will not be issued until the following items are received and approved by the Zoning Division. If the group home operation is a certified member of the Georgia Association of Recover Residences in good standing, complete page three of this guide to supplement for items one through six.

1. Proof of affiliation with a National, Regional, State, or County organization with a philanthropic mission
2. Name, address, and phone number of a certified house manager or designated caregiver that has a job description recognized by and is accountable to the affiliate organization.
 - a. This certified house manager or designated caregiver must provide Community Development within four hours of a telephone inquiry.
 - b. This certified house manager or designated caregiver must provide Community Development with a written document from that affiliate organization verifying their authority to respond to complaints and implement necessary corrective actions to remedy any violations that may occur.
3. Complete list of rules that all residents of the group home must abide by.
 - a. Notarized copy of each resident's written confirmation of the receipt of the rules.
4. Copy of a lease or financial agreement between each resident and the affiliate organization.
5. Curriculum and schedule of all educational activities that will be conducted on site that will enable the residents to live as independently as possible in order to reach their maximum potential under the direction and guidance of the house manager or designated caregiver.
 - a. There must be at least three scheduled educational activities per week.
 - i. The curriculum should include basic life skills, financial management, time management, and civic responsibility.
 - ii. The curriculum and schedule may be verified via periodic inspection by Community Development staff;
 - iii. consistent failure to implement the curriculum and schedule may constitute evidence to deny designation of a group home.
6. Schedule of all community activities that the residents of the home will be participating in that will enable the residents to reach their maximum potential under the direction and guidance of the house manager or designated caregiver.
 - a. There must be at least two scheduled community activities per month. At least one of the community activities should be in conjunction with a recognized 501c3 organization.
 - i. The schedule of community activities may be verified via periodic inspection by Community Development staff;
 - ii. consistent failure to participate in activities may constitute evidence to deny designation of group home.
7. Documentation of how many residents will live in the group home
8. A copy of the Certificate of Occupancy must be provided once issued.



Group Home Determination Criteria
Certified Member of Georgia Association of Recover Residences

Acknowledgement of Certified House Manager:

Notarization Required

“As the Certified House Manager of property *addressed as* _____,
I hereby affirm that the Group Home/Recovery Residence will have four or fewer persons, excluding resident staff, as required by Cobb County Code. I further affirm that the Group Home/Recovery Residence is not a halfway house, a treatment center for alcoholism or drug abuse, a work release facility for convicts or ex-convicts, a home for the detention and/or rehabilitation of juveniles adjudged delinquent or unruly and placed in the custody of the State, or other housing facilities serving as an alternative to incarceration. The term ‘group home’ shall also not allow the use of a dwelling as an apartment or duplex. A group home shall not allow use of the dwelling as a home for individuals on parole, probation, or convicted and released from incarceration, for any crimes including child molestation, aggravated child molestation, or child sexual abuse, as defined in O.C.G.A. (|) 16-6-4 or individuals required to register as sex offenders pursuant to O.C.G.A. (|) 42-1-12. I further affirm that each of the residents is aware of the house rules and has signed a lease or financial agreement with the Group Home/Recovery Residence. I further affirm that in accordance with our Certification with the Georgia Association of Recovery Residences that all of the residents are participating in the educational and community activities required by Cobb County Code.”

Name of Property Owner: _____

Signature of Property Owner: _____

Must be notarized

Name of Certified House Manager: _____

Signature of Certified House Manager: _____

Must be notarized

24-hour contact information for Certified House Manager:

Cell: _____

Email: _____

A Copy of Georgia Association of Recovery Residences Certification must be Attached.