

# Georgia Downtown Development Professional

## Professional Development Program Instructions & Application

Georgia Downtown Association  
P.O. Box 105377 · Atlanta, GA 30348  
[www.georgiadowntownassociation.org](http://www.georgiadowntownassociation.org)

April 2010



Dear Georgia Downtown Development Practitioner:

Congratulations on your decision to apply for the Georgia Downtown Association's (GDA) designation as a Georgia Downtown Development Professional (GDDP). This designation distinguishes downtown developers who have reached a milestone of professional success in Georgia and who are committed to continuing professional growth. By attaining this milestone, you will join the growing ranks of Georgians who are elevating the practice of community and economic development with the quality standards of a true profession. The end result is a higher level of service to improve the quality of life for all of Georgia's communities and citizens. And this program need not be the end of your professional development. Many of the qualification requirements of the GDA program can also contribute to qualifying for national professional certifications including National Main Street Manager, Certified Economic Developer, and Economic Development Financial Planner.

Please read over ALL of the materials carefully before filling out the application.

Return your completed application package to GDA by August 6, 2010. Please be sure to include the appropriate fee with your application - \$100 for Level 1, \$200 for Level 2, and \$300 for Level 3. Applications are not complete until all materials are received by GDA. The application must either be received electronically by the deadline or postmarked by the deadline to receive consideration by the committee. The check list on page 12 will help ensure that your package is complete.

You will be notified of your application's acceptance and your official candidacy for your GDDP designation at least 30 days prior to the exam date. At that time you will also receive more specific information regarding the exact location and timing of your oral presentation and written exam, both of which will be conducted September 28, 2010 in Augusta, Georgia. Candidates who successfully complete the oral presentation and exam will be recognized at the Annual Georgia Downtown Awards presentation and will be awarded their GDDP designation at that time.

The GDDP Committee looks forward to considering your application. Again, congratulations on taking this important step in your continuing improvement as a professional downtown developer.

Should you have any questions, please contact Alan Dickerson at (678) 686-6213 or [adickerson@gmanet.com](mailto:adickerson@gmanet.com).

Sincerely,  
The GDA Professional Development Committee

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## General Requirements for Professional Designation

### Introduction

The Georgia Downtown Association's (GDA) professional development program is open to all who are in a profession related to downtown development.

This includes Main Street Managers, Better Hometown Managers, city planners, city managers, economic development service providers, etc.

The program is completely voluntary. The system is structured to recognize three levels of downtown development success in Georgia.

Level 1 is a basic grounding in downtown development practices. It is attainable at little incremental cost in time or expense beyond that which would normally be expected of a new professional in the field or one who works in a small community. This level is attained through participation in training, networking, professional meetings, and performing tasks on-the-job.

Levels 2 and 3 go well beyond a basic grounding. These levels represent correspondingly higher commitments to excellence, stronger achievements, and leadership in the professional practice of downtown development in Georgia.

### Level 1: Georgia Downtown Development Professional

"The professional has demonstrated a thorough working knowledge in the professional practice of downtown development in Georgia." This designation is generally attainable within 2-3 years of on-the-job experience.

### Level 2: Senior Georgia Downtown Development Professional

"The professional has demonstrated proficiency in application of critical knowledge, skills, and tools in the professional practice of downtown development in Georgia." This designation is generally attainable within 5-7 years of on-the-job experience.

### Level 3: Master Georgia Downtown Development Professional

"The professional has demonstrated mastery in the professional practice of downtown development in Georgia and has made significant contributions to the profession." This designation is generally attainable within 10-12 years of on-the-job experience.

*"The system is structured to recognize three levels of downtown development success in Georgia."*

## Requirements

The minimum qualifying requirements for candidacy at each level are summarized in Table 1 below, and the general procedures are summarized in Table 2. Be sure to read the detailed sections on pages 4-6 prior to completing the application.

<b>Table 1. General Qualifications</b>	<b>Level 1 GDDP</b>	<b>Level 2 Senior GDDP</b>	<b>Level 3 Master GDDP</b>
<b>Years Relevant Experience</b>	2	5	10
<b>GDA Membership (or other State equivalent)</b>	2	5	10
<b>Hours Training Received *</b>	50	120	240
<b>Hours Training Delivered</b>	n.a.	15	40
<b>Downtown Conferences Attended*</b>	2 (2 in state)	4 (3 in state & 1 national)	8 (5 in state & 3 national)
<b>Letters of Recommendation</b>	2	5	7
<b>Demonstration of Success</b>	Oral presentation and written exam	Written & oral presentation of case study and written exam	Submission of professional dossier and oral presentation of dossier

\* GDA maintains a pre-approved list of training.

## Exceptions

If a candidate believes that any exceptions are justified, she/he should make a written appeal to the GDA Professional Development Committee well before the application deadline. One example of a justified exception is a practitioner who has many years of experience. Another example is attendance at a training course or professional development event not listed on GDA's list of pre-approved courses.

<b>Table 2: General Procedures</b>	<b>Timing, Deadlines</b>
<b>Document training, achievements, etc.</b>	Ongoing
<b>Submit completed application for desired level.</b>	Received Electronically or Postmarked by August 6, 2010
<b>Candidacy notice from GDA; additional instructions.</b>	30 days prior to Exam Date
<b>Oral Presentations</b>	September 28, 2010
<b>Written Exams</b>	September 28, 2010
<b>Announcements &amp; Awards</b>	Awards Presentation, Georgia Downtown Conference

## Success

Candidates who successfully pass the oral presentation and written exam requirements will be formally recognized at the Awards presentation during the Annual Georgia Downtown Conference. They will receive a GDDP pin and certificate that designates their professional "level," e.g. bronze pin will designate GDDP, silver pin for Senior GDDP, and gold pin for Master GDDP.

GDA will also mail an individualized press release to the newly certified professional for distribution to their local media. GDA will send a letter of congratulations to the professionals' mayor and supervisor. GDA will also recognize the professionals' achievement in the Georgia Municipal Association's *Georgia's Cities* newspaper and the GDA newsletter following the Downtown Awards presentation.

### **Level 1, Georgia Downtown Development Professional**

"The Georgia Downtown Development Professional has demonstrated a thorough working knowledge in the professional practice of downtown development in Georgia." This designation is generally attainable with 2-3 years downtown experience.

Level 1 is a basic grounding in downtown development practice in Georgia. It is attainable at little incremental cost in time or expense beyond that which would normally be expected of a new professional in the field or one who works in a small community. It is attained by participation in training, networking, and professional meetings and by performing tasks "on the job".

The items listed below must be accomplished in order to attain Level 1, all within the same five-year period.

- 2 years active membership in the Georgia Downtown Association.
- Attendance at 2 Annual Georgia Downtown Conferences.
- 2 years minimum work experience in downtown development in Georgia.
- 50 hours of documented training class time, conducted by recognized educational service providers.
- 2 letters of recommendation (may include local officials, stakeholders, or other professionals in the field).
- Documented downtown organizational and management success – demonstrated by oral presentation.
- Working knowledge of downtown development issues, tools, resources – demonstrated by a passing score on written exam. The exam format may include true/false and multiple choice questions.

In special situations, exceptions may be granted with written appeal to the GDA Professional Development Committee.

### **Procedure**

- Application package is submitted, accompanied by all documentation and \$100 processing fee. **Applications must be received electronically or postmarked by August 6, 2010.**
- Application package will be reviewed by GDA Professional Development Committee and applicants will be notified of their eligibility to sit for the exam at least 30 days prior to exam date.
- Oral presentations to be conducted on "professional development day", which is September 28, 2010 (the day before the Annual Georgia Downtown Conference begins).
- Written exam will be conducted on "professional development day", which is September 28, 2010 (the day before the Annual Georgia Downtown Conference begins). Written exam will include true/false and multiple choice questions.
- Ratification of oral presentation and written exam results by GDA Professional Development Committee.
- Exam results will be made available to candidates.
- New "Georgia Downtown Development Professionals" will be announced and recognized during the awards presentation at the Annual Georgia Downtown Conference.

### **Documented Success – The Oral Presentation**

Downtown organizational and management success will be demonstrated in a 10-minute oral presentation to a GDA Professional Development review panel conducted on "professional development day." The candidate will be asked to provide an overview of his/her background, professional experience, and his/her current position. The candidate may use handouts, flip charts, PowerPoint or whatever other medium and aids she/he chooses. In case of technical difficulties, each candidate should bring four hard copies of his or her

presentation. The candidate will be evaluated on presentation style, delivery, and content as well as the organizational success. The point of the exercise is to conduct a professional presentation of the organization's strategy, operational plans, and program results. In addition to the presentation, the candidate will be asked questions which will be provided ahead of time. Approximately 10 minutes will be dedicated to questions/answers for a total of 20 minutes for oral presentation.

## **Scoring**

To receive this distinction, the candidate must receive a minimum average score of 80 percent on the oral and written sections combined. The average of both the oral and the written scores can not be lower than 70 percent. For example, if a candidate scores 70 percent on the oral and 70 percent on the written, he/she will receive a score of 70 percent, which is failing. However, if a candidate scores a 70 percent on the written and a 90 percent on the oral, then the total average of both scores is 80 percent. Thus the candidate will receive a passing score. When signing-in to take the exam, the candidates will be asked to provide the last four digits of his/her social security number as the exam results will be posted using this number in order to protect the identity of each candidate. The results will be posted at the Georgia Downtown Conference registration table within 24 hours of the exam.

## **Level 2, Senior Georgia Downtown Development Professional**

"The Senior Georgia Downtown Development Professional has demonstrated proficiency in application of critical knowledge, skills, and tools in the professional practice of downtown development in Georgia." The designation can be reached with 5-7 years of on-the-job experience.

Level 2 goes well beyond a basic grounding. This level represents correspondingly higher commitments to excellence, stronger achievements, and leadership in the professional practice of downtown development in Georgia. Specifically, the general requirements for Level 2 are listed below. In special situations, exceptions may be granted upon written appeal to the GDA Professional Development Committee.

- Level 1 certificate.
- 5 years active membership in GDA or other State equivalent (minimum of 3 years in GDA).
- 5 years minimum work experience in downtown development (a minimum of 3 years in Georgia).
- Attendance at a minimum of 3 Annual Georgia Downtown Conferences.
- Attendance at a minimum of one national conference related to downtown development (may include National Main Street, International Development Association and International Economic Development Council and others related).
- 120 hours of documented training class time conducted by recognized provider, plus 15 hours service as a trainer in various downtown-related topics.
- 5 letters of recommendation (may include local officials, stakeholders, or other professionals in the field).
- Documented programmatic success: written & oral presentation of case study.
- Passing score on a written exam (proficiency in tools of downtown development). The exam format will include true/false and multiple choice questions.

## **Procedure**

The procedure is the same as that described for Level 1. Level 2 application fee is \$200.

## **Documented Success – The Written/Oral Presentation**

The candidate must prepare a written case study description of a project or program that she/he has designed, conducted, led, etc., and the case study description must be submitted with the application package. The chosen project or program may cover any aspect of the candidate's downtown development mission. Technical specifications of the written document are listed below. Also, the candidate will make a 15-minute oral

presentation to a GDA Professional Development review panel to be presented on “professional development day” prior to the Annual Georgia Downtown Conference. The candidate may use handouts, flip charts, PowerPoint or whatever other medium she/he chooses. In case of technical difficulties, each candidate should bring four hard copies of his or her presentation. The point of the exercise is to conduct a professional written and oral presentation. The candidate will be evaluated on technical writing style, oral presentation style, delivery, and content as well as the case study’s instructional value. Through this exercise the candidate contributes to a library of best practices and success stories that GDA may periodically publish as educational material for the membership.

### **Case Study Document Specifications:**

Length: Approximately 1000 words

## **Scoring**

To receive this distinction, the candidate must receive a minimum average score of 80 percent on the oral and written sections combined. The average of both the oral and the written scores can not be lower than 70 percent. For example, if a candidate scores 70 percent on the oral and 70 percent on the written, he/she will receive a score of 70 percent, which is failing. However, if a candidate scores a 70 percent on the written and a 90 percent on the oral, then the total average of both scores is 80 percent. Thus the candidate will receive a passing score. When signing-in to take the exam, the candidates will be asked to provide the last four digits of his/her social security number as the exam results will be posted using this number in order to protect the identity of each candidate. The results will be posted at the Georgia Downtown Conference registration table within 24 hours of the exam.

## **Level 3, Master Georgia Downtown Development Professional**

“The Master Georgia Downtown Development Professional has demonstrated mastery in the professional practice of downtown development in Georgia and has made significant contributions to the profession.” This designation is attainable with 10-12 years downtown experience.

The qualifying requirements for Level 3 are listed below. Attainment of this level signifies an exemplary professional in terms of accomplishment, contributions to the profession, and leadership in the professional practice of downtown development in Georgia. In special situations, exceptions may be granted with written appeal to the GDA Professional Development Committee.

- Level 2 certificate.
- 10 years active membership in GDA or other State equivalent (minimum of 5 years in GDA).
- 10 years minimum work experience in downtown development (a minimum of 5 years in Georgia).
- Attendance at a minimum of 5 Annual Georgia Downtown Conferences.
- Attendance at a minimum of 3 national conference related to downtown development (may include National Main Street, International Development Association and International Economic Development Council and others related).
- 240 hours documented training class time conducted by recognized providers, plus 40 hours service as a trainer in various downtown-related topics.
- 7 letters of recommendation (may include local officials, stakeholders, or other professionals in the field).
- A professional dossier and oral presentation presenting the applicant’s body of work, especially to include significant contributions to the profession in Georgia; may include training others, mentoring, publications, exemplary program success, awards; consideration given for GDA service.
- Significant contributions and their impact in Georgia, orally presented to review panel.

## **Procedure**

The procedure is the same as that described for Level 1. Level 3 application fee is \$300.

## **Documented Success – The Professional Dossier and Oral Presentation**

The candidate must prepare a dossier that describes her/his body of work as a downtown professional. The dossier must be submitted with the application. The dossier will include brief descriptions of such accomplishments as (but not limited to) the following: awards, leadership activities, creative product, publications, courses developed and/or conducted, mentoring, and consulting services. The point of the dossier is to provide a comprehensive view of the candidate's professional body of work over an extended period and, especially, her/his contributions to the profession. Also, the candidate must make a 30-minute oral presentation to a GDA Professional Development review panel to be presented on "professional development day" prior to the Annual Georgia Downtown Conference. The presentation should cover the candidate's body of work as stated in the dossier. The candidate may use handouts, flip charts, PowerPoint or whatever other medium she/he chooses. In case of technical difficulties, each candidate should bring four hard copies of his or her presentation. Following the oral presentation, the review panel will be allotted 30-minutes for an oral question and answer session with the candidate. The candidate will be evaluated on technical writing style, presentation style, delivery, and content as well as the candidate's overall success in downtown development.

## **Scoring**

To receive this distinction, the candidate must receive a minimum score of 80 percent. When signing-in to take the exam, the candidates will be asked to provide the last four digits of the social security number as the scores will be posted using this number in order to protect the identity of each candidate. The scores will be posted as soon as reasonably possible at the Georgia Downtown Conference registration table.

**Application – 2010**

**A. General Applicant Information.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Last Four Digits of Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate whether you presently have a GDDP designation. Check one.

- Level 1, Georgia Downtown Development Professional
- Level 2, Senior Georgia Downtown Development Professional

Years with present employer \_\_\_\_\_ Years membership in GDA \_\_\_\_\_

Name of supervisor, if applicable \_\_\_\_\_

Years in downtown development related practice: Total \_\_\_\_\_ In Georgia \_\_\_\_\_

List below professional memberships other than GDA, and note any leadership responsibilities.

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Applying for professional (check one):

- Level 1, Georgia Downtown Development Professional
- Level 2, Senior Georgia Downtown Development Professional
- Level 3, Master Georgia Downtown Development Professional

**B. Employment Information.**

Please indicate employment history in fields related to downtown development by submitting a recent and complete resume. Resume should include the following for each past position:

- Title/Position & Dates
- Employer, Supervisor, & Organization
- Address
- Job Description and duties
- Major accomplishments (please limit to three, very brief)

**C. Eligibility Criteria.**

- ✓ Training Courses and Conferences Attended: Fill out & attach Table A (Refer to GDA’s pre-approved list, available at [www.georgiadowntownassociation.org](http://www.georgiadowntownassociation.org)).
- ✓ Training Conducted: Fill out & attach Table B.
- ✓ For Level 2 only: attach written case study documenting programmatic success.
- ✓ For Level 3 only: attach professional dossier representing your body of work.

Please note below additional information you think will be helpful in evaluating your application. Attach additional pages if necessary (clearly mark that they address this specific question).

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Notes:

1. If any exceptions have been granted, attach a copy of the waiver letter from GDA.
2. Include appropriate application fee (check or money order only, payable to Georgia Downtown Association) – \$100 for Level 1, \$200 for Level 2, or \$300 for Level 3.

**D. Applicant’s Signature.**

*In signing this application, I fully understand that it is an application for candidacy only, and its purpose is to present my qualifications to undergo final evaluations that will determine my GDA professional designation, if any. I will execute the necessary documents and supply additional information as requested by GDA. If I am unable to complete the evaluation process, I may complete it in the following year. However, if I’m not selected to sit for the test, the application fee will be refunded.*

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_





**Final Checklist**

*Have you included all of the following:*

- The application, all sections completed?
- Your signature on the application?
- Your resume included?
- Letters of recommendation included?
  - 2 for Level 1
  - 5 for Level 2
  - 7 for Level 3
- Any additional information specified?
  - Waiver letters from GDA, if any.
  - Extra sheets, if any, to list training attended, training conducted, other additional information.
  - Level 2 -Case Study.
  - Level 3 -Professional Dossier.
- Check or money order payable to Georgia Downtown Association?
  - \$100 for Level 1
  - \$200 for Level 2
  - \$300 for Level 3
- Application may be submitted electronically to:
  - Alan Dickerson at [adickerson@gmanet.com](mailto:adickerson@gmanet.com)
  - (must be received no later than August 6, 2010)**

Or mailed to:

Georgia Downtown Association  
Professional Development Committee  
P.O. Box 105377  
Atlanta, Georgia 30348  
**(must be postmarked no later than August 6, 2010)**

For questions, please contact Alan Dickerson at (678) 686-6213.