



# TERRELL COUNTY, GA

JUNE 2025

## FAST FACTS

- Located in southwest Georgia, [Terrell County](#) has 9,185 residents; Dawson serves as the county's seat and largest town.
- Terrell County was [formed in 1856](#) from parts of Randolph and Lee Counties.
- The [economy](#) of Terrell County has transitioned from relying primarily on agriculture to focusing on retail trade, health care and social assistance, and manufacturing as its main industries.
- Terrell County is home to several [historic sites](#), including two that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Terrell County Courthouse and the Garden Club House.



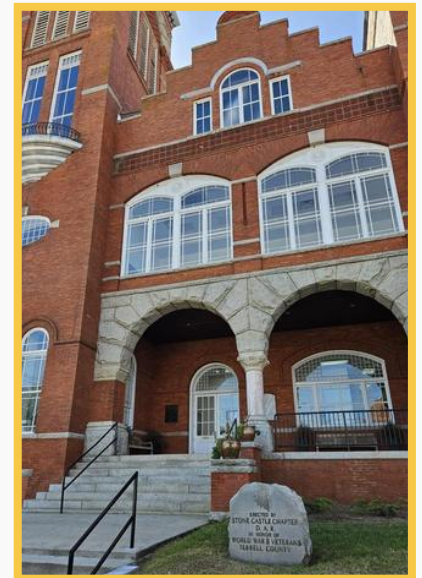
Terrell County is a relatively rural county in the Albany, Georgia metropolitan area. In the winter of 2023, after discovering that the county was likely to experience a major revenue shortfall, Terrell County sought assistance to improve their budgeting, streamline their operations, and gain a better understanding of their cash flow for long-term stability and growth.

In March 2024, a technical assistance (TA) team conducted a site visit, completed a needs assessment, and prepared a report detailing insights and recommendations for the county's budgeting and financial management system. Then, in May 2024, Terrell County began receiving in-depth TA through the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) [Distressed Cities Technical Assistance \(DCTA\) program](#).

Terrell worked with the TA provider in two phases. The first phase, which spanned from May to September of 2024, focused on developing tools, templates, and systems for budget development and financial monitoring. The second phase of TA, which took place between October and December of 2024, prepared Terrell to start the upcoming fiscal year strong by utilizing these new tools.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND BUDGETING

Terrell's public safety, emergency management, and roads and safety departments—some of the county's most costly—were facing significant challenges with implementing operational and budget management reforms. Additionally, unreliable financial reporting systems and inconsistent budgeting practices hindered the county's ability to fully understand their financial health and manage operations.



To address these challenges, this phase of the TA engagement focused on providing Terrell County with a tailored suite of tools and strategies to enhance financial oversight and support informed decision-making. These tools included:



- A cash flow projection model used to monitor monthly revenues and expenditures. They also now have a sample manual and user guide for using and updating the projection model in the future.
- A user-friendly and professional budget document for presenting financial data to elected officials and the public.
- An additional summary document for the county and Board of Commissioners outlining Terrell's bank accounts, including a description of the account, restrictions on the account, and current balance.
- A template for budget impact reporting, which county leaders use during Terrell County's Board of Commissioners meetings to track the Board's spending decisions and promote transparency on how they impact fiscal policy decisions.
- Fiscal status reports (ongoing snapshots of the county's financial health) sent to the County Administrator and other leaders ahead of Board of Commissioners meetings.

The implementation of these new tools and strategies has ultimately enabled the county to develop a foundation for financial management and long-term fiscal stability.

## STAFFING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Before receiving TA, Terrell County staff spent unnecessary hours trying to compile reports because they lacked the skills and knowledge to effectively use their budgeting systems and tools. To address this, the TA team helped Terrell develop workforce planning and succession strategies, with special attention to the duties of rank-and file employees. This included:

- Implementing training, resources, and materials for the County Administrator, County Clerk, and staff who hold financial management responsibilities across departments.
- Increasing financial knowledge among all staff and introducing practices that promote transparency and oversight of spending within the county.
- Leveraging a succession planning memo to aid the transition of a retiring long-time County Clerk.

## A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Throughout the engagement, Terrell County demonstrated strong leadership and a commitment to continuous improvement. County staff and leadership collaborated actively with the TA team, often including external partners such as auditors and financial advisors in key discussions. This collaborative environment helped ensure that the tools developed were practical, durable, and tailored to the county's context.

Through their participation in HUD's DCTA program, Terrell County has the tools, resources, and training they need to strengthen their finances and budgeting while also improving their staff's capacity to manage county operations and implement succession strategies. This will enable better decision-making, accountability, and fiscal stability overall. This partnership provides a valuable example of how TA can empower communities to address their financial management challenges.

***“They’ve [the TA provider team] developed a valuable analysis spreadsheet and tool to help us monitor our financial condition. It’s been a pleasure collaborating with such talented people.”***

***—Mike McCoy,  
County Administrator  
(2023–2024)***

