

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Five Georgia Communities Selected for State Housing Program

ATLANTA, GA (October 16, 2018) – Five Georgia communities have been newly selected to receive assistance with their housing needs through the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH), a public-private initiative that helps communities strategically grow their economies through housing-related solutions. The cities of Arlington, Centerville, Social Circle, Smyrna, and Conyers will begin the three-year program in February 2019. The communities were recognized at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) annual fall conference in LaGrange.

Through training and technical instruction delivered during a series of conferences, community housing teams design and implement strategies to enhance their economies as well as the quality of life for their citizens. During these sessions, each team will work with and receive continuous feedback from a facilitator or housing professional, as well as engage in cross-community collaboration.

The GICH teams consist of about 12 members, and include representatives from local government and businesses, nonprofit housing organizations and the public housing authority. Teams may also include members of local faith-based organizations and churches, development authorities, chambers of commerce, school systems, major employers and law enforcement.

Since the program's inception in 2005, 70 Georgia communities have benefited from the GICH program. The communities currently enrolled in the program are Athens-Clarke County, Evans County, Millen, Monroe, Rockmart, Bartow County, Commerce, Dublin, Fairburn, Union City, Warrenton, Byron, Cochran, McRae-Helena, Norcross, and the joint collaborative of Troup County, Hogansville, LaGrange, and West Point.

Some of the resulting strategies undertaken by communities include revitalizing distressed neighborhoods and subdivisions, developing multi-family apartments through tax credits, updating codes and ordinances, creating a land bank authority, writing an urban redevelopment plan, conducting a housing assessment, and launching community clean-up programs.

Each year, GICH communities are selected to participate in the initiative through a competitive process. Communities are selected based on need and a demonstrated commitment to community improvement. Any city, county or public housing authority in Georgia is eligible to apply on behalf of a community housing team. Applications are due in August.

GICH is a collaboration of partners including: the University of Georgia's Housing and Demographics Research Center, a unit of the Department of Financial Planning, Housing and Consumer Economics in the College of

Family and Consumer Sciences; UGA's Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach; the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and the Georgia Municipal Association, a voluntary, non-profit organization based in Atlanta that provides legislative advocacy, educational, employee benefit and consulting services to its 521 member cities.

The GICH program is funded by Georgia Power. Additional in-kind services are provided by UGA Cooperative Extension and UGA's Archway Partnership and the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, both units of the UGA Office of Public Service and Outreach.

For more information about GICH, visit the UGA website: <https://www.fcs.uga.edu/fhce/gich/3>.

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About the GICH Program

Launched in 2005, GICH helps communities improve their quality of life and economic vitality through the development of housing and revitalization strategies. GICH offers communities a three-year program of collaboration and technical assistance. During a community's participation, team members work to create and launch a locally-based plan to meet local housing needs. GICH grew out of Georgia's experience with the National League of Cities' Affordable Housing Program.

About the Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) partners with communities to create a climate of success for Georgia's families and businesses through community and economic development, local government assistance, and safe and affordable housing. Using state and federal resources, DCA helps communities spur private job creation, implement planning, develop downtowns, generate affordable housing solutions, and promote volunteerism. DCA also helps qualified low- and moderate-income Georgians buy homes, rent housing, and prevent foreclosure and homelessness. For more information, visit www.dca.ga.gov.