

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Five Georgia Communities Selected for State Housing Program

Housing-related changes have been implemented by 66 GICH communities

ATLANTA, GA (October 4, 2017) – 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 collaborative of Troup County/Hogansville/LaGrange/West Point and the Cities of Byron, Cochran, McRae-Helena, and Norcross will begin the three-year program in February 2018. The communities will be recognized Wednesday at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) annual fall conference in Savannah.

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.

“GICH has helped a range of communities achieve progress toward housing stability,” said DCA Commissioner Christopher Nunn. “It’s exciting to see these teams collaborate and develop creative and affordable housing solutions in their communities to build a strong foundation for growth and revitalization.”

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, 66 Georgia communities have benefited from the GICH program. The communities currently enrolled in the program are Athens-Clarke County, Bartow County, Commerce, Dublin, Evans County, Fairburn, Millen, Monroe, Rockmart, Union City, and Warrenton

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, as well as by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) through a Rural Community Development Initiative grant. 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 DCA website at <http://www.dca.ga.gov/communities/CommunityInitiatives/programs/GICH.asp>

CONTACTS:

MaryBrown Sandys
Director of Marketing & Communications
Georgia Department of Community Affairs
(o) 404-679-0661
marybrown.sandys@dca.ga.gov

Karen Tinsley
GICH Program Director
The University of Georgia
(o) 706-542-4949
klt@uga.edu

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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.