



2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

Helping Your Community Meet Its Housing Needs

Since the program's founding in 2004, GICH has facilitated progress toward housing stability in 93 communities throughout Georgia. Communities selected to participate in the three-year program receive technical assistance from state practitioners and academic experts, as well as a competitive advantage in applications for state community development and affordable housing funding. Upon graduation from the three-year program, GICH communities are encouraged to continue to work toward local housing goals and utilize the GICH network of state agencies, academic experts, and other GICH teams which have addressed often similar housing issues. GICH provides a platform for teams to develop creative solutions to complex local challenges through collaboration with local, regional, and state leaders. In 2023, the freshmen, sophomore, and junior classes of GICH continued efforts to overcome the challenges of the pandemic, learn more about their housing stock, create on-going local partnerships, and meet regularly as teams.

INVESTMENTS IN GICH COMMUNITIES

Participation in the GICH program offers communities special benefits through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), including enhanced access to grant funding and affordable housing development opportunities. Consequently, GICH communities have witnessed a total investment of \$29.2 million in funding, benefiting both current participants and alumni. Specifically, GICH communities received \$9.9 million through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, \$4 million through the Community Housing Investment Program (CHIP), and \$15.2 million through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC). These funds were allocated for various housing-related initiatives, encompassing rehabilitation and new construction projects.



In 2023, across all current and former GICH communities, DCA invested:

Low Income Housing Tax Credit financing for the development of affordable rental housing **\$15.3M**

Community Development Block Grant funds supporting local housing and community development initiatives **\$9.9M**

Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) grants for rehabilitation and construction of owner-occupied homes **\$4.0M**

Since 2004, DCA has invested over 550 million across the 93 Georgia communities that have participated in GICH. **\$550M**

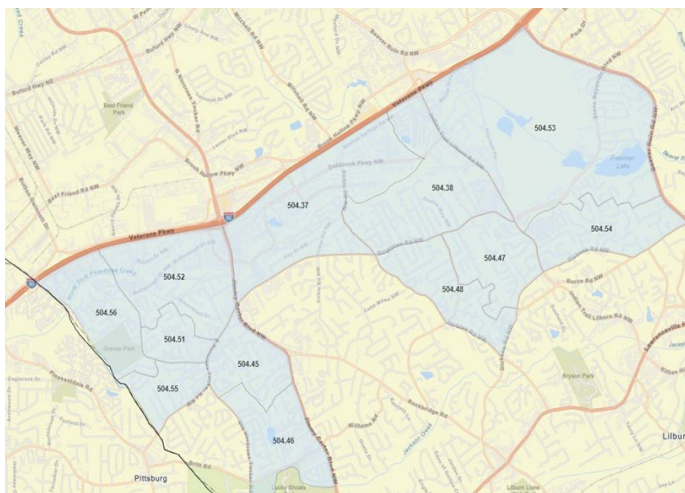
Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)

2023 COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

FRESHMAN

Gwinnett County: In 2023, Gwinnett County initiated its participation in the GICH program. Being one of the largest communities both in terms of population and area, the Gwinnett housing team encountered a unique challenge: identifying a focal point for their housing efforts within the county. After deliberation, the team opted to address housing issues within an area comprising six contiguous census tracts adjacent to I-85. This specific area suffers from a significant lack of affordable rental and homeownership options, alongside a high concentration of aging properties and extended stay hotels.

To tackle these pressing housing challenges, the Gwinnett housing team has outlined several strategies for implementation. Firstly, they are crafting a community engagement strategy aimed at involving key community stakeholders in the housing planning process. Additionally, the team is developing an affordable housing toolkit to delineate the resources and planning strategies that local government can employ to bolster affordable housing options countywide.



Gwinnett County GICH Target Area



Rendering of the North Canton Village Project

City of Canton: The City of Canton's GICH housing team made remarkable progress during their inaugural year in the program. Setting ambitious goals for the forthcoming three years, they aim to establish a local land bank authority, devise an education and outreach plan, enact ordinances for accessory development units, and finalize the City's down payment assistance program for prospective homebuyers. To achieve these objectives, the Canton housing team established three subcommittees focusing on education and engagement, neighborhood revitalization, and resource allocation.

Additionally, the team identified a target area to concentrate their initial housing efforts. Within this area, their primary focus will be on augmenting the number of attainable rental units through collaborative efforts with LIHTC developers and potential land donations. Notably, the North Canton Village Project and the Tanner Place development are two initiatives the team anticipates will significantly contribute to the creation of attainable housing in the City.

"Inspiring a pathway to strong, sustainable communities by providing affordable and equitable housing for all who desire to call Canton home."

~ City of Canton GICH Mission Statement

SOPHOMORES

Chattooga County: In their second year in the GICH program, the Chattooga County housing team has achieved several milestones in their endeavor to address local housing issues. To combat problems of housing blight and dilapidation, the team completed a windshield survey assessing the housing conditions in their target area. Additionally, they conducted a survey to gather input from community members regarding local housing challenges.



City of Canton GICH housing team members

Moreover, the team forged a crucial partnership with their area's Habitat for Humanity. They also made significant progress toward their goal of increasing missing middle housing by creating a subdivision/commercial property ordinance and securing a grant to fund infrastructure improvements in the area. Furthermore, the team has diligently crafted criteria to guide their decision-making process in awarding support letters for LIHTC developers.

JUNIORS

City of East Point: The City of East Point's housing department concluded its last year in the GICH program on a high note. Thanks to their dedicated efforts, the city secured a Community Development Block Grant totaling \$130,000 for blight removal in their designated area. Identifying nine blighted properties, they plan to utilize this funding for their removal.

Additionally, the city has launched its no-cost minor home repair program specifically tailored for seniors. This initiative aims to assist residents aged 55 and above whose homes require repairs, providing much-needed support to enhance their living conditions.



City of East Point GICH housing team logo.

Housing Related Impacts

At the end of each year, housing team leaders from current and alumni GICH communities complete a survey which captures impact of their housing teams' efforts. Responses to this survey indicated that in 2024 a total of 150 new housing units were developed, 55 units were revitalized or rehabilitated, and 23 abandoned/dilapidated units were demolished.

Housing Impacts 2024	
# new housing units constructed	150
# housing units revitalized or rehabilitated	55
# abandoned/dilapidated housing units removed	23
# of clients in housing counseling classes	5

Source: GICH 2023 Annual Report Survey

Retreat Attendance

The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) experienced record attendance at both its Spring and Fall retreats in 2023, with well over 200 attendees at each gathering. The largest contingent consisted of representatives from current and alumni GICH housing teams, followed by guests, program staff/facilitators, and speakers.

GICH 2023 Retreat Attendance			
Role	Spring 2023	Fall 2023	Totals
Speaker	11	8	19
Program staff / facilitators	26	21	47
Guests	29	33	62
Housing team member	173	153	326
Totals	239	215	454

Source: Georgia Initiative for Community Housing Retreat Attendance Data

GICH PARTNERS

The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) helps communities improve quality of life and economic vitality through the development of locally-based housing and revitalization strategies. GICH is a collaboration between the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; 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; University of Georgia's Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach; and the Georgia Municipal Association. GICH's founding partner, Georgia Power, and its ongoing retreat sponsor, Wells Fargo, continue to support the initiative's ability to reach diverse communities across Georgia. GICH is also funded through the Rural Community Development Initiative (RDCI), a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Grant program.

