



## 2025 GICH Application

### Instructions

Before completing the 2025 Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) application, please carefully review all instructions and questions. Applicants are strongly encouraged to attend one of the two live informational webinars before submitting their final applications.

These webinars are scheduled for **Friday, May 30, 2025, and Friday, June 27, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM**. For more details about participating in the webinars, please visit the **GICH website**. Additionally, you may share your email with the GICH Director to join the mailing list for updates. For any inquiries regarding the GICH application process, please contact Dr. Jermaine Durham, GICH Director, at [Jermaine.Durham@uga.edu](mailto:Jermaine.Durham@uga.edu) or by phone at 706-542-4949.

Please carefully review the following instructions for completing the 2025 GICH application. All municipal and county governments within Georgia, that are recognized as Qualified Local Governments (OLGs) by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) are eligible to apply to the GICH program. Additionally, local public housing authorities are also eligible applicants. Final applications must be submitted through this online portal. Applicants are not required to complete the application in one session and can revisit their incomplete forms without losing information. It is advisable to compose all requested materials as a separate document and save periodically to prevent loss of progress due to unforeseen technical issues.

**Letter of Intent:** (1-2 pages) Prior to submitting the application, prospective communities are required to submit a letter of intent (LOI) through the GICH LOI submission portal by **5:00pm on Friday July 11, 2025**. The link to this portal can be found on the 'How to Apply' webpage on the GICH website. If you have any issues submitting your LOI please email Dr. Jermaine Durham, GICH Director, at [Jermaine.Durham@uga.edu](mailto:Jermaine.Durham@uga.edu). In the LOI, please describe the circumstances that influenced your community to apply for the GICH program. This may include

housing issues facing your community, current partnerships and housing activities underway, or recent planning efforts citing the need. Also include name, title, affiliation, telephone number, and email address of the person who will assume responsibility for pre-application communication. Please note, the initial point of contact person may be different from the primary contact for the application as listed in line 3-5.

## Written Application

**Questions 1- 2:** Provide the name and address of the organization applying for participation. The applicant organization should be the lead agency/fiscal agent for the Community Housing Team. The applicant organization must be a city or County government or public housing authority.

**Questions 3-8:** Provide the name and contact information of the primary person (line 3-5) and the secondary person (lines 6-8) that will be the contact for activities of the Community Housing Team and questions about the application.

**Question 9:** Indicate which person will be Team Leader. The Team Leader is expected to be committed to the full three-year life of the program and to coordinate team meeting arrangements, work schedules, fiscal matters, and to generally keep the team on task and motivated.

**Question 10:** There is no charge for participation in GICH activities. However, communities must cover travel and lodging costs for their housing team members to participate in the biannual retreats and other associated team activities. **On average, yearly costs for a housing team can range between \$3,000 - \$5,000.** There are many ways in which these costs can be covered. For example, each team member might have their costs covered by the organization they represent (e.g., local government, housing authority, chamber of commerce, nonprofit, etc.). The community might also wish to raise funds locally or a single entity (e.g., local government, financial institution or chamber of commerce) might be willing to cover this cost. This section should indicate how the community anticipates covering these costs and the status of that funding. The estimated costs per team will be:

**Yearly Travel Costs:** Costs will consist of travel to two multi-day (two or three day) retreats, which may require several overnight stays. Lunch is provided during one day of each retreat, but dinners are not provided. Most partnering hotels offer continental breakfast. For initial planning purposes, assume that conference hotel rooms may cost between **\$100 and \$135** per night. The costs for the first year will be slightly higher than in the second and third years, due to more retreat workdays for first-year communities. Your travel costs will vary depending on the number of team members attending and the distance of the retreats from your community.

**Other Costs:** Any costs incurred by the Community Housing Team during its work between retreat sessions will be the responsibility of the team itself. These costs should be negligible and based on decisions the team makes about meetings involving meals, local staff time

devoted to meetings and meeting preparation, and other related expenses. Those costs and funding sources do not need to be included in this application form.

**Question 11:** List the members of the Community Housing Team. These should be the people who plan to attend GICH retreats and other activities and who are committed to working on the community's housing issues. Housing teams normally consist of 10 to 20 individuals and include representatives from local government, business (particularly banks, real estate, and builders/developers), nonprofit housing organizations, and the public housing authorities; among others. Each team is strongly encouraged to include a local elected official. Other representatives can include faith-based organizations, development authorities, chamber of commerce, school system, major employers, and law enforcement. If you have more than one individual from any group, include them in the "other" category. In addition to giving the person's name, title, and organizational affiliation, each person is required to sign the application. If an individual is unable to sign, please provide an email that confirms their commitment to participate on the housing team. If someone has not yet confirmed but has been invited, write "invited" in the signature column for that person.

Broad community representation and dedicated member participation in the housing team is vital to developing and implementing an effective housing plan. Participating communities are encouraged to send their full housing teams to each retreat. It is not always practical for every member to travel to each retreat. In fact, the team may have members that never attend the retreats but participate in local meetings and events. It is imperative, however, that each team has a core group of 6 to 10 members that are dedicated to attending the retreats for the full three-years in the program. **GICH teams are required to attend (2) retreats per year during the duration of the three-years. GICH teams must ensure that at least 4 members are in attendance during the scheduled retreats to remain "active". Teams with less than 4 members at retreats will have the status of "inactive" and can risk losing DCA benefits or being removed from the program.**

**Question 12:** Indicate the extent of local support the Community Housing Team has from local governments and other entities in the community. Evidence of local government support includes allocations of budgeted funds, pledges of staff support, letters of support, and Council/Commission resolutions. Other types of local support would include pledges of funds and/or staff support, letters of support, and in-kind support such as meeting space and food. Relevant documents should be uploaded through the links provided in the application.

**Question 13:** Describe in detail the primary housing issues facing the community. You may attach additional pages if there is not enough space in the text box. You may also attach completed housing studies, maps or other information that may be helpful for the selection committee. The description included in the application should cover all relevant housing problems that the community's housing team would like to focus on while in the program. This

information will give the GICH selection committee members an idea of the types of issues that are central to the community's housing needs.

**Question 14:** Describe housing activities successfully completed or currently underway or any other previous housing efforts in the community, including applications made for funding (such as CHIP, CDBG, LIHTC, etc.). Activities described might include neighborhood rehabilitation efforts, rehabilitation of public housing units, concentrated code enforcement efforts, and construction of new affordable housing, among others. You may attach additional pages to respond to this section.

**Questions 15-16:** Indicate whether the City and County governments have building inspection and/or code enforcement staff, a zoning ordinance, subdivision controls and an Urban Redevelopment Plan.

**Questions 17-20:** Indicate whether your community has participated in the Main Street Program, the Archway Partnership, or the Georgia Downtown Renaissance, has a land bank authority, has completed a housing needs assessment in the past three years, or has worked with the Regional Commission in the past five years.

**Question 21:** Indicate whether your city government has collaborated with your county government on a community development or housing related project in the past five years. If so, please describe.

**Question 22:** Indicate whether your county government has collaborated with your city government on a community development or housing related project in the past five years. Describe below.

**Question 23:** This section provides you with an opportunity to explain why your community wishes to participate in the Initiative, what you hope to achieve by participating, how this work fits into the community's current initiatives and plans, and what strengths the community brings that will increase the likelihood of successfully addressing its identified housing issues. Additional pages may be attached to respond to this section.

**Question 24:** This section provides communities who applied in the previous year but were not accepted into the program an opportunity to explain why your community is ready to participate in the Initiative this year. This section does not apply to first-time applicants. Briefly describe activities and efforts that you have taken to build dedicated and sustainable team leadership and to work together as a collaborative group since your last application or site visit. (You may attach one additional sheet to respond to this section)

**Certification & Acknowledgement of Responsibilities:** An executive official of the applicant organization must certify that the information is correct, and that the community will assemble a housing team and fully participate in the program if chosen. The certifying official should be a responsible official of the organization (i.e., Chief Elected Official, Chair of the County

Commission, Executive Director of the Public Housing Authority, or the appropriate combination of eligible applicants).

**Electronic Submittal: All GICH applications must be submitted electronically, via this portal.** The completed application will be officially submitted once the executive official of the applicant organization provides his/her signature and clicks the "next" icon on the final page. All attachments must be scanned and incorporated into the application as PDF documents where indicated. Housing team member signatures can also be submitted as a PDF document. In the case that signatures cannot be obtained, emails from team members indicating their participation will be accepted. If you have any trouble submitting the application, would like to verify the status of your application, or have any further questions, please contact Dr. Jermaine Durham, GICH Director, via email (Jermaine.Durham@uga.edu) or by phone (**706.542.4949**).

**Application Deadline:** Completed applications must be received through this portal by 5:00 PM on Thursday, July 31, 2025. Applications submitted beyond this deadline will not be accepted. A printable PDF version of this electronic application can be found on the GICH website (<https://www.fcs.uga.edu/fhce/gich-how-to-apply>). Feel free to review and share the version. However, please note that the official application must be submitted through this online portal.

## **GICH Applicant Information**

### **Section A — Applicant and Financial Information**

Name of Applicant (Community)

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Address

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Primary Contact Person

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Primary Email Address

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Primary Telephone

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Fax

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Secondary Contact Person

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Secondary Email Address

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Secondary Telephone

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Fax

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Indicate who is the Team Leader

- ☐ Primary Contact
- ☐ Secondary Contact

## **Section B — Community Housing Information**

Funding Source(s) and Amount Allocated for Travel and Lodging Expenses

	Funding Source(s) (1)	Amount (2)	Status (Requested or allocated) (3)
Year 1 (1)			
Year 2 (2)			
Year 3 (3)			

Community Housing team Members: Signatures from housing team members indicating an agreement to participate can be submitted as an attachment.



Members	Name	Title	Affiliation	Is a signature indicating an agreement to participate provided?
City Government Official - elected				
City Government - staff				
County Government (if applicable) - elected official				
County Government (if applicable) - staff				

Bank				
Real Estate				
Builder/Developer				
Nonprofit Organizations				
Habitat for Humanity				

Public housing authority				
Local school system				
Regional Commission/Planning Agency				
Chamber of Commerce				
Cooperative Extension				

Family Connections				
Resident/citizen				
Faith-based organization				
Planning/Zoning/Historic/ Preservation Board				
Economic Development/Downtown Development/Urban Redevelopment/Land Bank Authority				

Other				
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Please attach evidence of support from local government(s), businesses, and/or other organizations (e.g., letters or support, local government resolutions, and other actions):

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Describe the primary housing issues facing the community. In evaluating the adequacy and suitability of existing housing stock to serve current and future community needs, you may consider the following factors: housing types and mix, condition and occupancy, local cost of housing, cost-burdened households in the community, jobs-housing balance, housing needs of special populations, and availability of housing options across the life cycle. (you may attach two additional sheets to respond to this section):

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Describe housing activities successfully completed or currently underway or any other previous housing efforts in the community, including applications made for funding (such as CHIP, CDBG, LIHTC, etc.). (you may attach one additional sheet to respond to this section):

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Does the City government have the following:

Building Inspection Staff

Yes (1) ... No (2)

If Yes, how many positions (full-time equivalent)?

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Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan

Yes (1) ... No (2)

Code Enforcement Staff

Yes (1) ... No (2)

If Yes, how many positions (full-time equivalent)?

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Zoning Ordinance

Yes (1) ... No (2)

Subdivision Ordinance

Yes (1) ... No (2)

Urban Redevelopment Plan (O.C.G.A. 36-61-1)

Yes (1) ... No (2)

Does the County Government have the following:

Building Inspection Staff

Yes (1) ... No (2)

If Yes, how many positions (full-time equivalent)?

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Code Enforcement Staff

Yes (1) ... No (2)

If Yes, how many positions (full-time equivalent)?

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Zoning Ordinance

Yes (1) ... No (2)

Subdivision Ordinance

Yes (1) ... No (2)

Has your community participated in the following programs?

	Yes/No	Years
Georgia Main Street		
Archway Partnership		
Georgia Downtown Renaissance		
DCA Georgia PlanFirst Program		
GMA Place Making Collaborative		

Does your community have a land bank authority?

Yes (1) ... No (2)

Has your community completed a housing needs assessment in the past three years?

Yes (1) ... No (2)

If Yes, please describe the scope, target area(s), funding, etc.

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Has your community worked with your Regional Commission on community development activities in the past 5 years?

No (1) ... Yes (2)

Yes, please describe:

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If this application is being submitted on behalf of a municipal government, has the city government collaborated with the county government on a community development or housing related project in the past five years?

Yes (6) ... No (7)

If so, please describe below.

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If this application is submitted on behalf of the county government, has the County government collaborated with a municipal government within its jurisdiction on a community development or housing related project in the past five years?

Yes (1) ... No (2)

If so, please describe below.

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Briefly describe why your community wishes to participate in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing, what you expect as an outcome from your community's participation, and how this work fits into the community's current initiatives and plans. (You may attach additional sheets to respond to this section).

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This section provides a community who applied in the previous year but was not accepted into the program an opportunity to explain why your community is ready to participate in the Initiative this year. This section does not apply to first-time applicants.

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Briefly describe activities and efforts that you have taken to build dedicated and sustainable team leadership and to work together as a collaborative group since your last application or site visit. (You may attach additional sheets to respond to this section).

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## **SECTION C — CERTIFICATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Organization** - The housing team must include broad community representation. Communities are expected to:

- Develop a recruitment plan to ensure the team remains reflective of your community, which includes a means of replacing nonparticipants or team member resignations. Furthermore, the team must continue to seek out new members when the need arises.
- Include a local elected official who is part of the team; consistently participates with the group by attending GICH retreats and local meetings and acts as a liaison back to the city council.
- Notify the GICH program coordinator when team leader (or primary or secondary contact persons) change, by completing approved paperwork.

**Attendance & participation** - Dedicated team member participation on the housing team at the biannual retreats and local meetings is vital for meaningful facilitated discussion and developing and implementing an effective housing plan. Communities are expected to:

- Maintain active and substantial participation at every retreat and at all group presentations and individual work sessions. This also includes giving report back presentations on progress at every retreat, starting in the fall of the first year.
- GICH teams must ensure that at least 4 members are in attendance during the scheduled retreats to remain "active". Teams with less than 4 members at retreats are defined as "inactive" and can risk losing DCA benefits, or be removed from the program.
- Create and adhere to a local meeting schedule to continue planning development and implementation between initiative retreats. Communities must maintain a list of attendees and meeting minutes.

**Product** - The GICH program partners with communities to improve their quality of life and economic vitality through the development of locally based housing and revitalization strategies. Communities are expected to:

- Develop a plan working with their facilitator during retreat work sessions. • continue to refine and amend the plan during local meetings.
- Take steps to implement action items.
- Assure sustainability of plan by developing future action items (juniors).
- Maintain electronic copies of the up-to-date working plan. This is the responsibility of the local team leader. To the best of my knowledge the information in this application is true and correct. By signing below, the official representative of the applicant certifies these statements and acknowledges the following responsibilities of program participation:

Date:

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Name of official representative:

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Title:

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Signature:

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