



GICH 2026 Application

Instructions

Before completing the 2026 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 29, 2026, and Friday, June 26, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM**. For more details about participating in the webinars, please visit the **GICH "How to Apply" webpage**. For any inquiries regarding the GICH application process or if you would like to join the GICH mailing list for updates, please contact Dr. Jermaine Durham, GICH Director, at Jermaine.Durham@uga.edu or by phone at 706-542-4949.

Please carefully review the following instructions for completing the 2026 GICH application. All municipal and county governments within Georgia, that are recognized as Qualified Local Governments (QLGs) 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 10, 2026**. 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 .

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.

Application Deadline: Completed applications must be received through this portal by 5:00 PM on Friday, July 31, 2026. 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 printable version. However, please note that the official application must be submitted through this online portal.

Application Question Instructions

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. Please use the official address of the agency (e.g., city hall, county office, housing authority main office).

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 the Housing 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.

Questions 10 - 12: Beginning in the Fall of 2026, members of current GICH housing teams will be charged a \$50 registration fee for GICH biannual retreats. Communities must also 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 \$4,000 - \$6,000.** 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:

GICH Biannual Retreat Registration Fees: GICH hosts two retreats each year—one in the spring and one in the fall—where most program activities take place. In accordance with Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) requirements, each GICH community must

have at least four housing team members attend each retreat. **The registration fee is \$50 per team member, with a maximum of \$500 per team.** Once a team reaches five paid registrations, no additional fees will be charged. Teams that send more than five members are only responsible for the \$500 maximum, and any additional attendees may participate at no extra cost.

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 \$145** 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 13: Please provide a list of individuals who will serve on your Community Housing Team. These should be people who plan to attend GICH retreats and other program activities and who are committed to addressing the community's housing issues. Housing teams typically include 10 to 20 members and should reflect broad community representation. Teams are encouraged to include representatives from local government; the business sector (particularly banks, real estate professionals, and builders/developers); nonprofit housing organizations; and public housing authorities. Each team is strongly encouraged to include at least one local elected official. Additional representation may include faith-based organizations, development authorities, chambers of commerce, school systems, major employers, and law enforcement.

If multiple individuals represent the same organization or sector, please list additional individuals under the "Other" category. For each team member, provide their name and title, and ensure they sign the application. If a member is unable to sign, include an email confirming their commitment to participate. If an individual has been invited but has not yet confirmed, indicate "invited" in the signature column. Broad representation and active participation are essential to developing and implementing an effective housing plan. Communities are encouraged to involve their full housing team; however, it is not always practical for every member to attend each retreat. Some members may contribute primarily through local meetings and activities.

It is critical, however, that each team maintain a core group of 6 to 10 members who are committed to attending retreats throughout the full three-year program. GICH teams are required to attend two retreats per year. To remain "active," each team must have at least four members in attendance at each retreat. Teams with fewer than four attendees will be

considered “inactive” and may risk losing Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) benefits or being removed from the program.

Question 14: 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 15: 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 participating 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 16: 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 17 - 27: 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.

Question 28 - 31: Indicate whether your community has participated in the identified statewide programs, developed a landbank authority, conducted a housing needs assessment, or worked with its Regional Commission on a community development project.

Question 32: Indicate whether your city or county government has collaborated with the corresponding city or county government within its jurisdiction on a community development project in the past five years.

Question 33: 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 34: 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 Friday, July 31, 2026. 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.

Section A - Applicant and Financial Information

Q1 Please indicate the name of the applicant (i.e., Community)

Q2 Please provide the address of the applicant that is applying. Please use the official address of the agency (e.g., city hall, county office, housing authority main office, etc.).

Q3 Primary Contact First and Last Name

Q4 Primary Contact Email Address

Q5 Primary Contact Telephone Number

Q6 Secondary Contact First and Last Name

Q7 Secondary Contact Email Address

Q8 Secondary Contact Telephone Number

Q9 Please indicate who is the housing team leader

- Primary Contact
- Secondary Contact
- Other: Please provide first and last name

Q10 Please indicate the source(s), estimated amounts, and status of the funding your housing team will use for retreat registration fees, travel, and lodging during its **first** year in the GICH program:

- Funding sources(s) _____
- Amount of funding _____
- Status (requested or allocated)

Q11 Please indicate the source(s), estimated amounts, and status of the funding your housing team will use for retreat registration fees, travel, and lodging during its **second** year in the GICH program:

- Funding sources(s) _____
- Amount of funding _____
- Status (requested or allocated)

Q12 Please indicate the source(s), estimated amounts, and status of the funding your housing team will use for retreat registration fees, travel, and lodging during its **third** year in the GICH program:

Funding sources(s) _____

Amount of funding _____

Status (requested or allocated)

Section B - Community Housing Information

Q13 **Community Housing Team Members** Please provide a list of individuals who will serve on your Community Housing Team. Housing team members should be individuals who plan to attend GICH retreats and other program activities and who are committed to actively working with the team to address your community’s housing issues.

Use the following link to access the GICH “How to Apply” webpage, where you can download the Housing Team Member Identification Form. Once completed, please upload the document using the file upload button below. Be sure to include signatures from all housing team members.

If multiple individuals represent the same organization or sector, please list any additional individuals under the “Other” category. For each team member, include their name and title and ensure they sign the application. If a member is unable to sign, please provide an email confirming their commitment to participate.

Q14 **Evidence of Support** Please attach documentation demonstrating support from local government(s), businesses, and/or other organizations. Acceptable materials may include letters of support, local government resolutions, or other formal actions indicating commitment.

Q15 **Housing Issues** Describe the primary housing challenges facing your community. In assessing the adequacy and suitability of the existing housing stock to meet current and future needs, consider factors such as housing types and mix; condition and occupancy; local housing costs; the prevalence of cost-burdened households; the jobs–housing balance; the needs of special populations; and the availability of housing options across the life cycle.

You may attach additional documentation to support your response to this section.

Q16 Current Housing Activities Describe housing activities that have been successfully completed, are currently underway, or represent prior efforts in the community. Include any funding applications submitted—such as CHIP, CDBG, or LIHTC—and their outcomes, if known.

You may attach additional documentation to support your response to this section.

Municipal Government Information

Does the City government have any of the following:

Q17 Building inspection staff

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many building inspection staff positions does it have (full-time equivalent)?

Q18 Housing component of the Comprehensive Plan

Yes

No

Q19 Code Enforcement Staff

Yes

No

If yes, how many code enforcement staff positions does it have (full-time equivalent)?

Q20 Zoning Ordinance

Yes

No

Q21 Subdivision Ordinance

Yes

No

Q22 Urban Redevelopment Plan (O.C.G.A. 36-61-1)

Yes

No

County Government Information

Does the City government have any of the following:

Q23 Building inspection staff

Yes

No

If yes, how many building inspection staff positions does it have (full-time equivalent)?

Q24 Code Enforcement Staff

Yes

No

Q25 If yes, how many code enforcement staff positions does it have (full-time equivalent)?

Q26 Zoning Ordinance

Yes

No

Q27 Subdivision Ordinance

Yes

No

Q28 Has your community participated in any of the following programs? If so, please indicate the number of years it has been involved.

Georgia Main Street Program

UGA Archway Partnership

DCA Georgia Plan First Program

The Georgia Economic Place Making Collaborative

Q29 Does your community have a land bank authority?

Yes

No

Q30 Has your community completed a housing needs assessment in the past three years?

Yes

No

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

Q31 Has your community worked with your Regional Commission on community development activities in the past 5 years?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please describe the nature of the collaboration.

Q32 If this application is being submitted on behalf of a municipal or county government, indicate whether the entity has collaborated with the corresponding city or county government within its jurisdiction on a community development project in the past five years. For example, if the applicant is a city, has it worked with the county government during that time?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please describe the nature of the collaboration.

Q33 Please 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 documents to respond to this section.

Q34 This section provides communities that applied in the previous year but were not selected with an opportunity to explain why they are now ready to participate in the Initiative. This section does not apply to first-time applicants. Briefly describe the activities and efforts undertaken since your last application or site visit to address housing challenges, build strong, sustainable team leadership and to strengthen collaboration among team members.

You may attach additional documents to respond to this section.

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 and 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 aforementioned responsibilities of program participation

An executive official of the applicant organization must certify that the information provided is accurate and that the community will assemble a housing team and fully participate in the program if selected. The certifying official should be an authorized representative of the organization (e.g., Chief Elected Official, Chair of the County Commission, Executive Director of the Public Housing Authority, or an appropriate representative for joint applicants). If you have questions regarding the eligibility of the signatory, please contact Jermaine Durham, GICH Program Director, at Jermaine.Durham@uga.edu. Once the application has been signed, click the forward arrow to officially submit your GICH application. Thank you for your interest in the GICH program. We look forward to reviewing your community's application.

Signature: _____