ALUMNI RESOURCE GUIDE

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I) INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the GICH Alumni Resource Guide! The purpose of this document is to provide alumni with one location in which to access any information they need in order to maximize the resources at their disposal. This document provides information on topics such as alumni certification, team maintenance, program benefits, and more. Our hope is that alumni will use this guide in order to keep their GICH teams active and thriving long after their graduation period. Whether your team has maintained its activity since graduation, or you are a less active team looking to reconnect your team again, we hope this Alumni Resource Guide services your needs.

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II) GENERAL INFO ON ALUMNI CERTIFICATION

The purpose of Alumni Certification is to ensure GICH alumni continue their efforts of addressing affordable housing issues and shortages within their communities by utilizing the Housing Plan document developed while participating in the three-year program. Communities which have been successfully certified as 'alumni' of the GICH program have demonstrated active involvement in local government planning and community development through regular meetings among core GICH team members, continued refinement of local GICH Housing Plans, and team participation in GICH retreats and other professional development opportunities.

Teams must successfully complete a GICH Alumni Certification Application in order to become certified alumni. Generally, Alumni Certification Application becomes available in December each year and will be posted for download at https://www.fcs.uga.edu/fhce/gich-resources.

Please note that, all teams who complete the three-year program are considered alumni of the program, but only teams who successfully complete the alumni certification process are considered certified alumni. Certified alumni enjoy special consideration on DCA program applications.

Certification is only required for alumni teams seeking special consideration on DCA program applications including the Housing Tax Credit (HTC) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
applications. Special consideration in DCA program applications includes:
- The ability to receive extra point(s) on the 9% HTC application
- The ability to apply for CDBG funding each year rather than every other year

Any team that completed the three-year program is able to apply for certification. Please note that certification hinges on certain criteria including retreat attendance, team continuity and ongoing engagement. If your team has been "inactive" (i.e. not meeting regularly or not engaged in GICH-related activities) it is likely your team will not meet the criteria necessary to be certified. Alumni teams seeking certification in will generally need to meet the following criteria:

1. GICH Team Continuity
2. Retreat Attendance
3. Continuing Education
4. Annual Performance
5. Housing plan

If your team does not meet the criteria necessary to be certified, you are encouraged to start working towards meeting those criteria now. Criteria will generally remain the same from year to year. You are welcome to reapply for certification next year.

The certification is valid for two years. Communities who wish to maintain a "certified" status must re-apply for certification every two years.

A "Frequently Asked Questions" page can be found here. This page provides in depth discussions about many of the specific questions about certification.

Please contact GICH@dca.ga.gov with any questions.
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III) TIPS AND TRICKS ON MAINTAINING TEAMS
Things to Consider:

1. Who were the original team members?
    a. Knowing who participated before can give you insight on who needs to be a part of the new team.
    b. GICH maintains a database of all former communities and can assist with identifying former team members.
2. Review former housing work plans
    a. Previous housing work plans can provide great information about former initiatives and issues.
    b. GICH maintains files of work-plans.
3. Contact current GICH team leaders (particularly freshmen communities)
    a. One of the best sources of info about how to establish a team comes from other GICH communities.
    b. Freshmen communities have recently completed this process and can provide fresh insight.
4. Reapply for the program
    a. ***IF** your team has been disbanded for several years and/or your housing team will be comprised of completely new team members and stakeholders
    b. **THEN** consider reapplying
    c. Get familiar with the GICH application process
        i. Reestablishing your local housing team means that you will need to go through the application process.
        ii. Your team should get familiar with the application process as soon as possible
5. As natural attrition occurs, always consider who could be a new addition to the housing team
6. Consider implementing an attendance policy for your housing team

Characteristics of Successful Housing Teams
- Linkage to organizations outside of the community
- Progression from simple to complex activities
- Systematic gathering of information and analysis of community issues
- Training to gain community-building skills
- Early involvement and support from existing indigenous organizations
- Use of technical assistance

(Mattesich, 2015; Mattesich and Monsey, 1997)

IV) BEST-PRACTICES FOR ONBOARDING NEW TEAM MEMBERS

- [Learning from Alumni: Maintaining your Housing Team](#) by Rick Parker, Athens-Clarke County Housing Authority

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V) HELPFUL LINKS TO RESOURCES

Please visit [this link](#) to access a page of different organizations, agencies, and programs that your GICH Team might find helpful.

Association of County Commissions Georgia	www.accg.org
Center for Community Progress	www.communityprogress.net
Easy Living Home Program	www.easylivinghome.org
Fannie Mae	www.fanniemae.com
Fannie Mae Foundation	www.fanniemaefoundation.org
Federal Home Loan Bank	www.fhlb.com
Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta	www.frbatlanta.org
The Fuller Center for Housing	www.fullercenter.org
Georgia Association of Housing & Redevelopment Authorities	www.gahra.org
Georgia Association of REALTORS®	www.garealtor.com
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	www.dca.ga.gov
Georgia Housing Search	www.georgiahousingsearch.org
Georgia Manufactured Housing Association	www.gmha.com
Georgia Municipal Association	www.gmanet.com
Georgia Quality Growth	www.georgiaqualitygrowth.com
Georgia Rural Development Council	www.ruralgeorgia.org
Housing Assistance Council	www.ruralhome.org
Local Initiatives Support Coalition	www.lisc.org
MacArthur Foundation - How Housing Matters	www.macfound.org/programs/how-housing-matters/
Mortgage Bankers Association of Georgia	www.mbag.org
National Association of Home Builders	www.nahb.com
National Association of Real Estate Brokers, Inc. (Realtists)	www.nareb.com
National Council of State Housing Agencies	www.ncsha.org
Southface Energy Institute	www.earthcrafthouse.com
U.S. Census Bureau	www.census.gov
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)	www.usda.gov
USDA Rural Development	www.rudev.usda.gov
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	www.hud.gov
HUD Sustainable Communities Resource Center	www.huduser.org/portal/sustainability

VI) PAST GICH RETREAT PRESENTATIONS

View a selection of past presentations here using 'facs' for both username and password.

https://www.fcs.uga.edu/private/fhce/for-gich-communities

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VII) CONTACT INFORMATION FOR CERTIFIED ALUMNI COMMUNITIES

This link will take you to a list of the primary and secondary contacts for all of our GICH Teams. If you would like to update your contact information, please reach out to Program Director, Jermain Durham. It is important to keep the contact information up to date, as this list is how we will contact GICH Teams to disseminate important announcements. It is also the list that DCA uses to verify if the LIHTC applicants asking for extra points are certified alumni.

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VIII) LIHTC POLICIES

Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) are tax credits developers can access when building low income, multifamily housing. They can access these credits by applying in an annual, competitive application process. Many developers find these tax credits essential in keeping a low income development profitable.

GICH Certified Alumni communities can provide developers with two extra points to their applications. Applications are extremely competitive and two extra points can be the deciding factor in whether or not a developer is able to receive the tax credit.

 In order to receive the points, your GICH Team must submit a letter that:

- Proves the project is within the boundary of your GICH community
- Is executed by the primary or secondary contact on record
- Is accompanied by a letter from the local government supporting the issuance of the letter

GICH Teams can only issue one letter of support each year. If a team submits more than one letter in an application cycle, none of the projects will receive points. If there is more than one developer seeking your support letter, your GICH Team will need to deliberate amongst yourselves which project is most beneficial for your community.

More information on the LIHTC Program can be found here.

This excerpt is the portion of LIHTC's Qualitative Allocation Plan related to GICH. The whole plan can be found here.

2 Points

Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH)

Points will be awarded for projects that have a letter from a DCA Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) team (currently active or certified alumni as defined by GICH administrators) which clearly:
- Identifies the boundaries of their GICH community;
- Identifies the project as located within their stated GICH community boundaries; and
- Is executed by the GICH community's primary or secondary contact on record with the University of Georgia Housing and Demographic Research Center as of May 1, 2021.

Each GICH team may issue only one (1) letter for one project in this year's competitive round. If more than one (1) letter is issued, no project in that community shall be awarded this point.

Alumni GICH Teams which have not successfully completed a GICH Alumni Certification application in 2020 or 2021 are ineligible for the point in this section.

Minimum Documentation:
- Letter executed by the GICH community's primary or secondary contact on record with the University of Georgia Housing and Demographic Research Center as of May 1, 2021, committing the formal support of the majority of GICH members.
- Letter from Local Government agreeing to the issuance of the letter.

For Scattered Site Projects, the above documentation is required from each Local Government for each non-contiguous site.

XIV) ALUMNI COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT

OUTSTANDING ALUMNI

Dublin, *Leveraging Tools*

In conjunction with the County, the City of Dublin has continues to acquire homes in its Land Bank since its 2016 inception. In the past few years it has utilized multiple CDBG, CHIP grants for neighborhood home rehabilitation. Most recently with local and state partners they secured housing tax credits to renovate 44 apartment units using adaptive re-use and historic renovation. This project is set to begin in 2021 and units will solely be available for military veterans experiencing homelessness.

Monroe, *Creative Solutions*

The City of Monroe has found ways to empower and encourage local developers to assist in their housing goals. They leveraged a density overlay in their zoning code to create more opportunities in their downtown area. The pictures above show two of these new mixed-use developments. The left picture shows renovated residential above commercial and retail below, while the middle shows a local grocery store expansion to include a restaurant and added loft apartments above.

Rome, *Continued Progress*

Over the past five years the City of Rome leveraged CHIP and other grants for 12 single-family construction and down payment assistance for homes all sold for under $100,000. They partnered with the South Rome Redevelopment Corporation and Laurel Street Apartments for a LIHTC development which provided over 160 mixed-income rental units. The Northwest Georgia Housing Authority has been extremely active in the past three years. They are in the process of rehabilitating 200 units and constructing 76 new units. Over half of these are exclusively available to seniors.

Norcross, *Establishing Partnerships*

The Norcross housing team took quick action to understand and alleviate struggles of extended stay hotel residents, as well as seek out and collaborate with funding and implementation partners to address emergency housing needs during the height of the pandemic. Because of their large breadth of community partners, they were able to mobilize quickly to meet resident housing needs.

These are only a few of our incredible alumni communities. For information on others, please visit our website: https://www.fcs.uga.edu/fhce/gich-success-stories

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XV) ACRONYMS COMMONLY USED

GICH- Georgia Initiative for Community Housing

HTC/LIHTC- Housing Tax Credit/Low Income Housing Tax Credit

CHIP- Community Home Improvement Program

CDBG- Community Development Block Grant

FHA – Federal Housing Administration (HUD Office of Housing)

GIS – Geographic Information System

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XVI) CONTACT INFO

For general GICH related questions, please reach out to Jermaine Durham at jemaine.durham@uga.edu. For questions related to alumni certification, please reach out to Austin Chancy at austin.chancy@dca.ga.gov. To submit your alumni certification application, please send it to gich@dca.ga.gov.