



Action Requested/Required:

- Vote/Action Requested
- Discussion or Presentation Only
- Public Hearing
- Report Date: 3/19/26
- Hearing Date: _____
- Voting Date: _____

Department: Housing **Presenter(s) & Title:** Ken Patton
Housing Initiatives Director

Agenda Item Title:

Discussion of the Approval to Submit an Application for the City of Canton to Participate in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing Senior Program

Summary:

Staff is working on an application for the City of Canton to participate in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing Senior Program. The GICH Senior Program is a new, competitive program for GICH Certified Alumni Communities with a mission to holistically invest affordable housing funds into Georgia communities based on their strategic vision. The goal for The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is to braid targeted investments in 1-2 targeted and competitively selected alumni communities. Those braided investments may include guaranteed awards or strong competitive advantage within LIHTC, CHIP, and CDBG. As an expansion of the GICH curriculum, participants will receive targeted technical assistance and education from DCA and other housing and community development experts on how to best implement their communities housing plans. Participants will also be eligible to receive select DCA funding resources that result in direct housing investments. Two awardees will be selected for the two-year cohort.

Budget Implications:

Budgeted? Yes No N/A

Total Cost of Project: Check if Estimated

Fund Source: General Fund Water & Sewer Sales Tax Other:

Staff Recommendations:

Staff recommends City Council approves the Submittal of Canton's Application to Participate on the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing.

Reviews:

Has this been reviewed by Management and Legal Counsel, if required? Yes No

Attachments:

1. Agenda report
2. Senior Year application
3. Housing Team List
4. Proposed Target Area Map
5. Canton Community Summary
6. Canton Senior Plan



GICH Senior Year Application 2026

This is the application to participate in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) Senior Year program. GICH SY is available to all GICH certified alumni. This program is an advancement of the education and planning of the traditional GICH program by bringing technical assistance and training directly to your community. Participating communities will receive tailored technical assistance from DCA staff and other subject matter experts to achieve advanced housing planning that will deliver transformative results for local communities. The program has a specific neighborhood focus, meaning that participating communities will designate a target neighborhood for technical assistance and investments.

Applicants will be expected to provide:

- **GICH alumni certified status**
- **Proof of application to LIHTC, CHIP, or CDBG**
- **Team roster**
- **Current housing plan**

- **Community narrative**
- **GICH SY plan**
- **Map of the target neighborhood**
- **Detailed list of housing programs you have participated in**
- **Detailed list of partner organizations**

The GICH Senior Year expects its participants to accept three key program elements:

- **Neighborhood focus:** participants will narrow in on one target area within the GICH community geography. The program benefits will apply in this specific place and the education will focus on the development of a place-based strategy.
- **DCA education:** DCA will provide program education tailor-made to help the communities specific needs. Participating communities are expected to participate in discussion related to these programs and how they can benefit their target neighborhood.
- **Technical assistance and subject matter expert facilitation:** participants will work with external technical assistance providers and/or third party subject matter experts, as planned and provided by DCA, to develop their neighborhood strategy. These external partners will help the participants plan for housing with a focus on community building and provide both general and targeted advice to accomplish the community's plan for the target investment area.

Applications will be due Friday, April 10th. Please reach out to Austin Chancy at Austin.Chancy@dca.ga.gov if you have any questions.

Application Instructions

This application is divided into three sections: Applicant Information, Threshold Requirements, and Evaluation Criteria.

- Applicant Information includes contact information; please ensure you include someone from your housing team who will be responsive to emails.
- Threshold Requirements are the criteria that must be completed in order to be considered as a candidate for the program.
- Evaluation Criteria are the competitive sections where you get to demonstrate your plan for the program as well as your strengths as a community.

The scoring rubric can be found below.

Throughout the application you will be asked to submit documents. Please submit each document as a PDF, with the title "Team Name Document Name Application Year". An example would be "Atlanta Team Roster 2026" or "Thomasville Housing Plan 2026".

We look forward to reading your application!

Scoring Rubric

Scoring Category	Section Number	Criteria	Max Points
Threshold Criteria	1.	Alumni Certification Requirements	Y/N
	2.	LIHTC, CHIP, and CDBG	Y/N
Evaluation Criteria	3.	Team Roster	10
	4.	Housing Plan	10
	5.	Community Narrative	20
	6.	GICH Senior Year Plan	25
	7.	Map of Target Area	10
	8	Program Participation and Resources	15
		Total Points	100

Applicant Information

GICH Community City of Canton
Name

Primary Contact

Ken

First Name

Patton

Last Name

Email

ken.patton@cantonga.gov

example@example.com

Phone Number

(770) 704-1522

Please enter a valid phone number.

Secondary Contact

Jakob

First Name

Allen

Last Name

Email

jakob.allen@cantonga.gov

example@example.com

Phone Number

Please enter a valid phone number.

Threshold Requirements

This section includes the minimum requirements needed to participate in GICH Senior Year. All of these requirements are mandatory for the application to be scored.

Alumni Certification Requirements

For this section, please attach the documents you would submit for the GICH Alumni Recertification process. These documents include:

1. An updated team roster. Roster requirements are listed in the "Team Roster" section listed below.
2. Confirmation of two yearly team meetings in 2025. This could be a sign in sheet, meeting minutes, etc.
3. Confirmation of GICH retreat attendance for 2025.

Upload Alumni Certification documents here


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Team Roster (10 points)

Please attach your team roster. Your team roster **must** include:

- Designated primary and secondary contact (this can overlap with other roster positions)
- Elected local government officials
- Government employees (City Manager, Economic Development/Development Authority, Planners, etc)
- Housing Authority (if applicable)
- School Board official
- Resident of target area

The above categories must be filled on your roster for your application to be considered.

Your team roster **should** include:

- Representatives from local employers (note: if the community has key employers, representatives from that company should be participants)
- Faith leaders, nonprofit leaders, and/or community-based organization representatives
- Chamber of Commerce representatives
- County/City government (whichever the applicant is not)

Include any others you feel are important to your GICH team. This section will be scored competitively. While you do not need all categories filled from the "should" list, applicants that have robust teams will be scored higher than those that do not.

LIHTC, CHIP, & CDBG

Please attach proof that your GICH team/community has applied for or offered a letter of support to at least one of the following program during your time in GICH or as an Alumni:

- Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)
- Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for housing related purposes

Your community does not need to have been awarded but must demonstrate that you have applied for one of these programs either during your time in the GICH program or as a GICH alumni.

Upload LIHTC, CHIP, & CDBG Proof Here



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Evaluation Criteria

This section will be graded competitively against other applicants. Please answer thoroughly and thoughtfully.

Housing Plan (10 points)

Please attach a pdf of your housing plan. The plan needs to have been updated in the last two years. The structure of the plan is up to you, as this should be based on the plan you are using in your GICH Team. It should include progress made, projects underway, and the current goals you are working towards.

Housing Plan


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Community Narrative (20 points)

Write a one-to-three-page narrative about the state of housing in your community. This should include history up to applying for GICH, GICH experience, changes post GICH, and why now is a good time for this investment. Include relevant political and economic

issues, as well as a list of housing related accomplishments and summary of local investments made to address housing needs – whether civic or philanthropic. Also include outstanding barriers to fully implementing the local housing plans and any planned or executed activities taken to overcome those barriers. Include your community’s relevant experiences with the programs and resources listed below in the section “Program Participation and Resources” (note: program participation includes both successful and unsuccessful applications and implementation). Consider including data analysis and housing statistics for your community. This could include the number and composition of housing units (including those that are affordable whether subsidized or not and those that are owned or rented), the composition of real estate investment in your community, demographic and socioeconomic analysis, zoning composition, homelessness statistics, and housing cost data for your community.

When writing this narrative, you may talk about the community as a whole but spend most of your time focusing on the target area. The focus should be on how your target area is impacted by housing issues. Help us to get a feel for the community you plan to invest in with this program.

Questions to consider when drafting your narrative:

- What is your GICH team's vision for housing affordability in your community?
- What place-based plan has your team developed or identified as needing program support?
- What experience and external partnerships does your GICH team have to support successful implementation of aligned investment?
- What barriers exist for affordable housing in your community, and how will the GICH Senior Year program enable your GICH team to overcome them?
- What are some examples of your team engaging with the community?

Community Narrative



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GICH Senior Year Plan (25 points)

Please attach a document detailing your community's vision for GICH Senior participation. This should include:

- Target areas for development (include these areas' school district, legislative district, and zoning information). Include details about the surrounding amenities, including transportation options, community benefits, access to essentials, etc.
- What you hope to do with a hypothetical CHIP, CDBG, and/or LIHTC award
- The scope of these projects (how many units, single v. multifamily, etc)
- The community's need for this investment
- Ways your community will benefit from the DCA targeted education and what you hope to learn

This should be a detailed document no more than two pages in length. In our evaluation, we will be looking at the feasibility of your plan, such as the competitiveness of a proposed LIHTC project, CHIP project, etc, and your neighborhood focus.

GICH Senior Year Plan



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Map of Target Area (10 points)

Please include a map of the area you want to target with your GICH Senior Year investment. Draw the specific boundary on the map. This area should ideally constitute an existing neighborhood or community.

Map of Target Area



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Program Participation and Resources (15 points)

Please check the programs and resources below that your community has participated in. For programs you have not participated in, leave it blank.

DCA Housing Programs

	Applied successfully	Applied but not selected	Application currently pending
9% Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4% Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rural Workforce Housing Initiative (RWHI)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
HOME-ARP	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please include any other DCA housing programs in which your community has participated that you think are relevant but not included in the table above:

DCA Community Development/Planning Programs

	Applied successfully	Applied but not selected	Application currently Pending
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PlanFirst	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Georgia Main Street	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRFLF)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rural Zone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enterprise Zone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please include any other DCA community development programs in which your community has participated that you think are relevant but not included in the table above:

Local Initiatives and Assets

	Initiative/Asset
Completed a Housing Study since 2020 (please attach)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Landbank	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
City/County owned land that could be used for housing	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Code Enforcement	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Multifamily/Dense Zoning	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Blight Registry	<input type="radio"/>
Neighborhood Master Plan since 2020 (please attach)	<input type="radio"/>

Please include any other local initiative or asset you think are relevant but not included in the table above:

Accessory Dwelling Unit Program, Do

Housing Study and/or Neighborhood Master Plan (if you have one)



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External Partners

	Working Partnership
Regional Commision	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Habitat for Humanity	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Urban Land Institute	<input type="radio"/>
Purpose Built Communities	<input type="radio"/>
Appalachian Regional Commission	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Southern Crescent Regional Commission	<input type="radio"/>
Georgia Dream Lender	<input type="radio"/>

Please include any other external partnerships you think are relevant but not included in the table above:

Canton Housing Authority

Add Proof of external Relationship here



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Acknowledgement of Expectations

The GICH Senior Year expects its participants to accept three key program elements:

- **Neighborhood focus:** participants will narrow in on one target area within the GICH community geography. The program benefits will apply in this specific place and the education will focus on the development of a place-based strategy.
- **DCA education:** DCA will provide program education tailor-made to help the communities specific needs. Participating communities are expected to participate in discussion related to these programs and how they can benefit their target neighborhood.
- **Technical assistance and subject matter expert facilitation:** participants will work with external technical assistance providers and/or third party subject matter experts, as planned and provided by DCA, to develop their neighborhood strategy. These external partners will help the participants plan for housing with a focus on community building and provide both general and targeted advice to accomplish the community's plan for the target investment area.

By submitting your application, you are agreeing that, should your community be chosen, you will participate in all three aspects of the program.

This is the end of the application. Do not click submit unless you have filled out each portion of the application.

CANTON SENIOR APPLICATION 2026**CANTON HOUSING TEAM**

Name	
Ken Patton	Canton city staff-Primary Contact
Shawn Tolan	Canton City Council, Target Area Resident
Chris Coulter	Mortgage Loan Officer
David Moody	Regional Land Bank Authority Board, Canton Housing Authority Board, Business Owner-Real Estate
Kendall Jones	Regional Land Bank Authority Board
Hope Bowling	Habitat for Humanity-North Central Georgia
Briana Stewart	Habitat for Humanity-North Central Georgia
Jacquelyn Loberg	Canton Housing Authority Executive Director
Mitch Hamilton	Cherokee County Board of Education staff
Sonia Carruthers	Cherokee Focus – non-profit
Leonard Akers	Pastor, My Local Church, Chamber of Commerce member
Nancy Tucker	Serenade Heights – non-profit, Chamber of Commerce member
Jennifer Hughes	Canton Downtown Development Authority
De Gale	Stand Up for Seniors – non-profit
Lauren Johnson	Canton city staff
Tannish Welch	Charlie Ferguson Senior Center, Chamber of Commerce member
Catherine Long	Cherokee County staff
Jakob Allen	Canton city staff-Secondary Contact

CANTON GICH SENIOR APPLICATION 2026

CITY OF CANTON COMMUNITY NARRATIVE

The City of Canton has experienced rapid growth and development since 2000. Canton's 2000 population was 8,185. Today's estimated population is 40,377. With the collapse of the construction industry in the economic downturn of 2008-2009, numerous developments in the city went through foreclosure actions. Since that time the city has worked through the entitled and approved residential lots that were caught up in the foreclosures. Availability of affordable/workforce housing and blight are the 2 main issues facing the City of Canton. Local cost of housing and cost-burdened households are issues facing the City as well. According to the Cherokee County Housing Assessment (2020), 47% of owner-occupied housing in Canton was cost burdened with 50% of renter housing being cost burdened. Stakeholder interviews conducted as a part of the 2020 Housing Needs Assessment reflected a serious need for affordable/workforce housing and a serious need for affordable senior housing. Stakeholder interviews conducted for the 2020 Cherokee County Housing Study identified the need for affordable housing and workforce housing. Housing costs continue to rise due to land availability and land cost increases, materials cost increases, supply chain issues and increasing cost of labor and a lack of labor. From the FMLS Cherokee County list of December 2025, the median price of housing was \$505,500 with 31 homes listed under \$300,000 (8 move in ready). Median rental rates for detached units were \$2,213.

The City of Canton was accepted to participate in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) in the fall of 2022. The city participated in the GICH program from 2023 through 2025. The city participated in all the GICH Retreats during this time with multiple housing members attending. The City's Housing Team was exposed to numerous programs such as Land Banks, the Georgia Dream program, the CHIP program and the Rural work force housing program. The City's Housing team was able

to interact with other GICH communities and learn from each of them about their successes and challenges. The City's Housing Team was exposed to other programs such as CDBG, LITCH, Heirs Property and Housing Assessments.

The City of Canton has successfully implemented an Accessory Dwelling Unit program (permitted by right in residential zones). The City has created a Housing Fund to support affordable/workforce housing. The City has partnered with the Canton Housing Authority for 2 LITCH projects (Tanner Place and Oakside). Tanner Place is at the move in stage and Oakside is expected to close on funding this spring (May 2026). The City along with Cherokee County, Holly Springs and Woodstock has created the Cherokee Regional Land Bank Authority with Board members being appointed, officers elected and working through the adoption of Articles of Incorporation, By Laws and Policies and Procedure. The city has approved the creation of the Canton Community Land Trust. The City completed a Housing Assessment & Survey through the University of Georgia while in the GICH program (survey of 1,800 properties). The Housing Survey identified numerous properties in need of rehabilitation. This Housing survey serves as the Target area for the Housing Team work and planning. A survey conducted in 2025 showed that 1,560 homes were corporate owned. The city created a Down Payment Assistance Program for first-time homeowners. The City has developed and approved plans for the Canton Cottage Village on city owned property and is in the process of creating a partnership with Habitat for Humanity-North Central Georgia to create a minimum of 9 affordable/workforce houses along with an ADU on one of the lots. The Canton Housing Team completed 2 minor rehabilitation projects of owner-occupied houses in our target area. Canton Housing Team members conducted education at the Canton Farmers Market every Saturday during 2025. The Canton Housing Team also conducted 2 neighborhood education meetings.

The GICH Housing Team if selected to participate in the Senior Program envisions working to utilize some of the City owned property to develop more affordable/workforce housing. The Housing Team would like to make use of the Chip Program, the LITCH Program and the Rural Workforce Housing Program to further the provision of affordable/workforce housing. The City's partnership with the Canton Housing Authority provides much needed low-moderate income (30%-80% of AMI) housing opportunities but there is a need for affordable/workforce housing opportunities (80%-120 AMI). Local educators, protectors and healthcare workers are finding it difficult to afford to live in the community they work in. Recently, the Executive Director for the Canton Housing Authority stated that they have some protectors (police) whose income exceeds the income limits for their units by \$2,000 and the CHA sees the need for more affordable/workforce housing options. Utilizing the Cherokee Regional Land Bank Authority, the Canton Community Land Trust and City owned properties are the beginnings for creating more affordable/workforce housing options in the community. The Canton Housing Team has identified several city owned properties for potentially affordable/workforce housing projects. The Canton Housing Authority-owned Jefferson Circle property is being utilized for Oakside residents' relocation while the Oakside property is being redeveloped. It is expected that the Jefferson Circle property will be available for redevelopment toward the end of 2027 and planning for the redevelopment should begin now. The Canton Housing Team is hopeful that this property can be a joint venture project between the City of Canton, the Canton Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity-North Central Georgia to provide additional affordable/workforce housing.

GICH SENIOR YEAR APPLICATION 2026

CANTON SENIOR YEAR PLAN

Within Canton' Target Area for the Senior Program, there are several city-owned properties which could be utilized for development of affordable/workforce housing. The Senior Program Target Area is served by 2 elementary schools, Hasty and R M Moore, Teasley Middle School and Cherokee High School. The Senior Program Target Area is within US House District 1, Georgia House District 23 and Georgia Senate District 21. Within the Senior Year Target Area, the following zoning districts are noted: R-4, R-20, R-40, RA-6, RA-8, RM-15, PD as well as CBD, GC, LI, OI and CU.

The Canton Senior Year target Area is served by Cherokee Area Transportation Service (CATS) which operates an on-demand transit service (pick up at door). In the Target Area there are several parks interconnected by trails and sidewalks. In the Target Area numerous dining options (fast, fast casual & dine in) are available. Grocery stores, clothing stores and medical offices are located within the Senior Target Area.

The Jefferson Circle property (Canton Housing Authority) currently contains 31 residential units. A redevelopment of the Jefferson Circle property utilizing CDBG, Chip and/or Rural Workforce Housing could yield a minimum of 31 units which could be a combination of fee-simple and rental units. This project could be developed utilizing "Missing Middle" housing to include townhomes, duplexes, courtyard buildings, and cottage court detached units. There is a city owned property along Shipp Street adjacent to the Tanner Place LIHTC project which could potentially yield up to 20 townhome units. The City of Canton has the old Tippens School site (7.49 acres) within the Target Area and has concept plans to redevelop the property for a combination of residential and recreation opportunities while refurbishing the existing gym. The gym would serve for recreation uses as well as supportive services for the community and the city. The Canton Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity-North Central

Georgia have expressed an interest in partnering with the City of Canton on the redevelopment of this property. The City of Canton has developed the Hickory Flat Highway Gateway Concept Plan which is in the Target Area. The Plan reflects 2 areas for residential development. The concept plan reflects a mid-rise building with office/retail on 1st floor with residential above and another area reflecting townhomes. This area would be a prime location for residential development utilizing LIHTC and Chip programs for affordable/workforce housing. A Housing Strategies Report prepared for the City of Canton in 2020 identified Hickory Flat Gateway area as a potential residential redevelopment area with the potential of 140-160 affordable/workforce housing units mixed with retail and office.

The City of Canton as noted on the 2020 Housing Needs Assessment, the 2022 Update to the Canton Housing Needs Assessment and the 2020 Cherokee County Housing Study note the need for affordable/workforce housing options. If the City of Canton is selected for the GICH Senior Program, the program offers additional targeted education and facilitation to meet the needs for affordable/workforce housing.