

June 6, 2011

TO: Mayors and City Managers

Having vibrant neighborhoods with an adequate supply of safe, decent and affordable housing is essential to any community's economic vitality. Since 2004, the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH), a partnership of the Georgia Municipal Association, Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the University of Georgia Housing and Demographics Research Center, has been helping communities across Georgia address their housing and community development needs.

Many local leaders have a clear vision for their communities but need assistance getting started. GICH helps communities develop a clear road map for achieving their vision. This program provides a platform for thinking of creative solutions and networking ideas with housing professionals, city officials and staff, as well as community volunteers from across the state. GICH helps participating communities to foster vibrant neighborhoods, create new housing opportunities and enhance community development.

"Covington's involvement with GICH has paid great dividends. Not only has it helped us focus our housing efforts, it has also opened the door to financing opportunities that otherwise would have likely been out of reach for us. The resources shared by all of the sponsoring partners have allowed us to address our housing initiatives much quicker than we anticipated. We have also benefited by learning about programs and successes within other GICH communities. The program will pay dividends in Covington for many years to come."

- Mayor Kim Carter, City of Covington

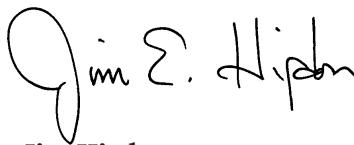
Our partnership is currently accepting applications for participation in this three-year program. Applications are available at <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/hace/hdrc/gich.html>. Additional information about GICH, including a list of participating communities and a summary of some of their accomplishments, can also be found on this website. Interested cities are encouraged to attend an informational webinar on July 14th and submit a letter of intent by July 29th. **Applications are due by September 2, 2011.** Five cities will be selected for participation, and these will be announced in November.

Learn more about the GICH program by visiting us in the Resource Room at the GMA Annual Convention in Savannah on Sunday, June 26th from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. in the Pulaski Room or by participating in the webinar on July 14th at 9:30 a.m. For questions, or to RSVP for the webinar, contact Karen Tinsley at 706.542.4949 or klt@uga.edu. We look forward to working with you on this Initiative.

Sincerely,



Mike Beatty
Commissioner
Department of Community Affairs



Jim Higdon
Executive Director
Georgia Municipal Association



Dr. Tom Rodgers,
Associate Director
Housing and Demographics Research
Center, University of Georgia