The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH)
Addressing Housing Issues from the Bottom Up

Jermaine Durham, PhD
ABOUT ME

▪ Jermaine Durham
  ▪ Assistant Professor, Dept. of Financial Planning, Housing and Consumer Economics
  ▪ Director: Georgia Initiative for Community Housing
  ▪ Extension Specialist

▪ Hometown:
  ▪ Hartwell, GA

▪ Education:
  ▪ BA in Philosophy – Georgia Southern University
  ▪ MS in Urban Studies and Planning – Savannah State University
  ▪ PhD in Planning, Design & Built Env. – Clemson University

▪ Teaching
  ▪ Housing & Community Development
  ▪ Affordable Housing
  ▪ City & Community Planning

▪ Research
  ▪ Housing policy
  ▪ Neighborhood change
  ▪ Socio-spatial inequality
Outline

• Why Housing Matters
• Housing Issues Overview
• Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH)
• Stories from GICH Communities
Why Housing Matters
Housing & Health

• Physically deficient housing has been linked to myriad health hazards

• Prior to the Lead-based Paint Prevention Act of 1978 lead was commonly used in both interior and exterior paint

• Dampness, mold, and rodent infestations can cause a host of respiratory illnesses

• Excessive heat and cold can lead to a host of illness and death

• Housing can expose families to crime

• Research has also linked overcrowded housing conditions and frequent moving to mental health

• Homeless are at greater risk of physical and mental health

Housing is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. Residential electrical use accounts for nearly one-fifth of all greenhouse emissions.

Residential patterns influence transportation characteristics which influence greenhouse gas emissions.

3 factors that influence emissions caused by household travel: (1) fuel efficient cars; (2) car usage; (3) numbers of miles driven.

Densely settled areas closer to public transit typically have lower CO2 emission rates.

Housing adds a considerable amount (approximately one fifth) to the nation's GDP.

Housing constructions, mortgage and rent payments, utilities, and household items all contribute to expenditures related to housing.

Housing is the primary source of wealth for Americans.

Housing is an essential source of revenue for all levels of government.

The housing market supports millions of jobs.

Housing Issues
Four categories of housing problems

**Affordability**
Cost burdened households, accessibility to mortgage credit;

**Adequacy**
Blighted housing, lacking indoor plumbing or heating; or older housing stock

**Availability**
Overcrowding, housing for various sized families, homelessness, sprawl

**Accessibility**
Institutional barriers, discrimination, ADA accessible units, special needs groups
• The AHS defines substandard housing as units that lack adequate plumbing, heating, hallways, electric service or kitchen facilities

• Units are categorized as having moderate or severe housing problems if they have one or more designated deficiencies

• Housing blight can include open cracks or holes in walls or external building deficiencies such as sagging roof, damaged foundation, etc.

• In the first half of the 20th century, housing adequacy was the preeminent housing problem in America. In 1940, nearly half of Americans were living in substandard housing

Defining Housing Affordability

- **Affordable housing** is housing for which a household pays no more than 30% of its annual income on housing costs.

- Households that pay more than 50% of annual income are severely cost burdened.

- Includes: apartments, townhouses, duplexes, attached single-family units, cottages, manufactured housing, accessory apartments and granny flats.

- Communities that have hot housing markets, particularly fast growing urban areas, face significant challenges with affordability.
Tradeoffs of Cost Burden

Families with Children and Older Households Cut Back on Different Vital Needs When Housing Costs Take Up Most of Their Incomes

Average Monthly Expenditures of Low-Income Households (Dollars)

Source: Harvard University JCHS State of the Nation’s Housing Report (2017)
Who’s Being Impacted?
Roughly 4 to 5 million households (4% to 5%) reside in moderately deficient housing.

Today roughly 2 million households (1% – 3%) of reside in severely deficient housing.

Renters experience substandard housing at higher rates than homeowners.

Lower income households are more likely to experience substandard housing.

While approximately one-fourth of Americans live in rural areas, they occupy nearly half of the nation’s substandard housing.

Factors Influencing Substandard Housing in Rural Communities

- Much of the rural housing stock is old (built before 1960)
- Some areas have not adopted or enforce housing, building, plumbing, electrical and fire prevention codes
- Lending institutions prefer to lend money to homebuyers and developers in larger towns
- Population loss, particularly young families, increases the number of vacant properties
- Weak local economic conditions and limited job opportunities leads to low incomes
- Access to qualified developers

Housing Affordability Trends: Renters vs. Owners

While the Number of Cost-Burdened Owners Has Fallen, the Number of Cost-Burdened Renters Has Reached a New High

Source: Harvard University JCHS State of the Nation’s Housing Report (2017)
Housing Affordability & Income

Most Lower-Income Households Pay More Than Half of Their Incomes for Housing

Share of Households with Severe Burdens (Percent)

Number of Severely Cost-Burdened Households (Millions)

Source: Harvard University JCHS State of the Nation’s Housing Report (2017)
Racial Disparities in Housing Affordability


Source: Harvard University JCHS State of the Nation's Housing Report (2017)
Housing Affordability by Age and Family Type

Older and Younger Households, Along with Single-Parent Families, Are Especially Likely to Be Cost Burdened

Source: Harvard University JCHS State of the Nation’s Housing Report (2017)
Factors Influencing Housing Affordability

- Decreasing supply & increasing demand
- Economic Inequality
- Government Regulations
- Housing Market Limitations

Affordability Crisis
Challenges Addressing Housing Problems

- Lack of capacity, human capital, infrastructure, scale and density needed to address housing and community challenges
- Difficulty in attracting developers
- Housing values relative to the construction/rehab costs
- Funding programs often target urban areas
- Demand for funding/ability to compete for funding
How is GICH Funded?

- USDA Rural Community Development Initiative Grant
- UGA Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS)
- Wells Fargo
- In-kind support from partnering organizations
Overview

- Three-year program
- 5-6 communities accepted each year
- Communities required to develop housing teams comprised of local leaders and residents
- Identify issues and needs, available resources, and potential obstacles and
- Learn best practices and available resources and funding for housing and community development
- Develop and implement plan to address identified housing issues
- Communities work with a facilitator to help planning process
- All participating communities attend two retreats each year
- Awarded special benefits from DCA
GICH Housing Team Members

- City government – elected official
- City government – staff
- Bank
- Real Estate Agents
- 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
4 Components of GICH

EDUCATION  NETWORKING  FACILITATION  FUNDING
• GICH Communities are allowed to apply for Community Development Block Grants on a yearly basis

• GICH communities are awarded additional points on Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP)

• Developers that partner with GICH communities receive and additional point on LIHTC applications
GICH Impact in Georgia

Since 2005, 71 communities and 1,269 local leaders and stakeholders across the state have participated on local housing planning teams and have directly benefited from the program.
**Current GICH Communities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freshmen</th>
<th>Sophomores</th>
<th>Juniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adel</td>
<td>Arlington</td>
<td>Byron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartwell</td>
<td>Centerville</td>
<td>Cochran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocilla</td>
<td>Conyers</td>
<td>McRae-Helena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rossville/LaFayette</td>
<td>Social Circle</td>
<td>Norcross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statesboro</td>
<td>Smyrna</td>
<td>Troup County</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# DCA Investments for 2019

## DCA Investments into GICH Communities 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DCA Programs</th>
<th>$ Amount Invested</th>
<th># of Communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Development Block Grants</td>
<td>$ 11,419,056.00</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community HOME Investment Program</td>
<td>$ 4,697,151.00</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) 9%</td>
<td>$ 11,904,509.00</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Total for all GICH Communities</td>
<td>$ 28,020,716.00</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of Local GICH Initiatives

- Targeted a distressed neighborhood for revitalization
- Developed multi-family tax credit apartments
- Redeveloped a failed subdivision
- Revised outdated codes and ordinances and adopted new ones
- Increased code enforcement
- Removed abandoned or dilapidated homes
- Created a Land Bank Authority or Community Land Trust
- Obtained first CDBG and CHIP grants
- Developed a rehabilitation program
- Provided housing counseling and down payment assistance
- Completed sewer/water infrastructure improvements
- Wrote and adopted an Urban Redevelopment Plan
- Created a Redevelopment Authority
- Obtained Opportunity Zone designation
- Conducted a housing assessment and windshield survey
- Partnered with Habitat for Humanity, Rebuilding Together, Work Camp, churches
- Convened neighborhood clean-up days
- Established neighborhood watch programs
- Launched an education/public awareness campaign
Arlington is a very unique historical town in Southwest Georgia due to being located in Calhoun County and Early County.

Population: 1,479
Accomplishments /Goals

- The City of Arlington has amended the Property Maintenance Ordinance at the request of the Housing Team to include the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) in August.
- 1st Community Cleanup Day held June 1st
- The City passed a resolution to partner with the SWGRC for the EPA Brownfield Coalition assessment grant at the request of the Housing team in July.
- Request the Hiring of a Code Enforcement Officer
  - The Team is reviewing a Blight and Tax Ordinance to recommend to the City Council.
  - The Yard of the Month Program will start in April.
  - 2nd Cleanup Day Scheduled April 11th
  - A Public Outreach Forum is scheduled for October 7th
Community Cleanup Day
Welcome to Norcross: a place to imagine

- Population: 17,000
- 20 miles N of Atlanta
- Easy access to I-85, ample green spaces, great schools, historic downtown
- “Welcoming City”
- “A place to imagine”
- Diverse population
- Minority-majority city
- 40%+ residents are Latino
- 44% Spanish and 60% language other than English
- 38% foreign born
- Gwinnett County microcosm: lack of affordable housing and rapidly growing ethnic population
Norcross has 14 hotels/motels/extended-stays within city limits, 9 of which operate as residences for long-term residents.

Depending on vacancy rates, 8-12% of the City of Norcross population resides in these extended-stay motels.

Wanted to find out who lives in these extended-stay motels and what barriers these residents face to finding permanent housing.

We surveyed residents of 9 extended-stay motels within Norcross city limits.

Face-to-face surveys administered via cellphones by volunteers who went door-to-door during four weekends in October & November 2018.

175 people filled out the 66-question survey.

Respondents received thank-you bags with toothpaste, toothbrushes and laundry pods, and were offered a 25-lb. food box.

FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND STUDY OF EXTENDED-STAY MOTELS
EXTENDED-STAY MOTEL
Report published in May 2019

Contact Information

- Jermaine Durham
- Phone: 706-542-4949
- Email: Jermaine.Durham@uga.edu
- Please visit the GICH website:
  - [https://www.fcs.uga.edu/fhce/gich/3](https://www.fcs.uga.edu/fhce/gich/3)
Questions?