



Commission Meeting

Meeting Date: April 2, 2024

HCD _ Augusta GICH Task Force Approval Request

Department:	HCD
Presenter:	Hawthorne Welcher
Caption:	Motion to approve the creation of an “Augusta Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) Taskforce” and give authority to the Office of Administration/HCD to use identified budget funding (\$30,000 max @ \$15,000/office department) to support the initiative on behalf of Augusta, Georgia.
Background:	<p>The purpose of this task force is to represent and participate in the University of Georgia’s GICH Program related initiatives which includes applying participate and administer workshops, trainings, community meetings, annual retreats for a term of three years.</p> <p>On behalf of the Augusta Georgia-Richmond County's Office of the Mayor, with guidance from the Office of Administration, the Augusta, Georgia Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) submitted a program application to the University of Georgia's Georgia Initiative for Community Housing Program. Out of seventeen (17) applications submitted, Augusta received a notification that it was selected to be one of five (5) communities to participate in the GICH 2024 Community Cohort program on October 2, 2023. This is achieved through: Technical assistance; Collaboration; Expert presenters; Training; Facilitation; Consensus building, and Networking and Mentoring.”</p> <p>Established in 2004, GICH was created because of Georgia's experience with the National League of Cities' Affordable Housing Program and the Magnolia Awards for Excellence in Affordable Housing. It is now a subsidiary of the University of Georgia's College of Family and Consumer Sciences, and its purpose is to help Georgia communities "improve their quality of life and economic vitality through the development of locally driven housing and revitalization strategies."</p> <p>Through partnerships with recognized global and state organizations such as Wells Fargo, Georgia Power, the University of Georgia's College of Family and Consumer Sciences, the University of Georgia's Archway Partnership, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the Georgia Municipal Association, Capital for Families and Communities, a total of ninety-three (93) communities have successfully benefited from GICH.</p>

Analysis: The team is comprised of representatives from twenty-three (23) industry leaders, Augusta Georgia Departments, auxiliary authorities, and community representatives, led by a Core Group to include: Team Speaker Porsha Beasley (Coast to Coast Real Estate), Co-Speaker, Keona Shaw (Office of the Mayor for Augusta, Georgia), Bernadette Fortune (Augusta/CSRA Habitat for Humanity), Lasima Turmon (Communities Foundation of the CSRA), Commissioners Stacy Pulliam and Francine Scott, Interim Administrator Takiyah Douse, and Director//Deputy Director of HCD Hawthorne Welcher and Shauntia Lewis.

If approved, the taskforce will begin a three-year technical assistance program wherein the respective housing team will a) attend two retreats a year with other participating communities; b) identify issues and needs, available resources, and potential obstacles. c) develop innovative ideas about meeting local housing needs and enhancing community development. d) learn about best practices, available resources, and funding for housing and community development. e) produce a community housing plan with objectives and goals, and d) begin implementing the action plan to create a portfolio strategy to improve the housing condition within District Two Turpin Hill community.

Financial Impact: Total Allocation of 30,000, split equally between the Office of Administration and HCD.

Alternatives: Do not approve HCDs request.

Recommendation: Approve the creation of an “Augusta Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) Taskforce” and give authority to the Office of Administration/HCD to use identified budget funding (\$30,000 max @ \$15,000/office department) to support the initiative on behalf of Augusta, Georgia.

Funds are available in the following accounts: The Augusta Georgia Administrator’s Office and HCD.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY: N/A