



## ***Guide to Requesting the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Letter of Support***

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit or LIHTC program was enacted in 1986 during the Reagan Administration by the Tax Reform Act and is the largest producer of affordable housing today. The LIHTC program allocates Federal and State tax credits to qualified developers to construct rental units for low to moderate-income renters. The program is an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) program rather than a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program, and it is administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the state's housing and community development agency.

The Housing Tax Credit program can be a positive asset for a community as it has stringent accountability standards from application through the 30-year affordability period, a period of time in which the owner must keep the rent affordable and is subject to DCA inspection and compliance requirements. It addresses the need for available, attractive, and attainable housing for seniors, working families, and individuals with disabilities.

### ***The Basics of How the Housing Tax Credit Program Works***

The Housing Tax Credit Program follows these basic steps:

1. The IRS allocates tax credits to each state.
2. The State Housing Finance Authority, DCA, sets rules for developers annually through the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP). The QAP development process begins in the summer months during public input and listening sessions and ends with the QAP workshop each February followed by approval of the governor.
3. Developers compete to win 9% tax credits.
4. If housing tax credits are awarded, private investors contribute equity to build the housing development and receive the benefits of the tax credits.
5. Housing is constructed, typically within two years of award, and rents must remain affordable for at least 30 years. Usually, rents are 60% of the Area Median Income.
6. The tax credit is distributed over 10 years and begins once the unit or units are inhabited.

### ***DCA Community Initiatives***

Housing Tax Credits are awarded from the results of an extremely competitive point-driven application with scoring defined by the annual QAP. DCA may award 2 points to an application that seeks to develop in a community that has undertaken planning through the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH). The local GICH housing team, current or certified alumni, may provide a letter indicating the majority of the members of the housing team support the project.

The letter must incorporate the following elements:

1. It must identify the boundaries of their GICH community.
2. It must identify the development as being within the community's stated GICH boundaries.
3. The letter must be executed (signed) by the GICH community's primary or secondary contact on record with the University of Georgia Housing and Demographic Research Center as of the date provided in the annual QAP.

The GICH housing team may issue only one letter for one project during each Housing Tax Credit competitive round. If the community issues multiple letters for submittal, no project within the community will receive the Community Initiative point. A letter from Local Government agreeing to the issuance of the letter must also be provided.

## **Rome-Floyd County Housing Team Point-based Scoring System**

Over the last few years, Rome-Floyd County has seen significant interest from developers hoping to receive LIHTC funding. Project proposals and applications for these projects are submitted to Georgia DCA for consideration.

Applicants are judged using a highly competitive, point-based scoring system developed by DCA. Project criteria and funding decision authority are determined at the State level. Nevertheless, as a GICH community, the City of Rome, Floyd County and the Rome-Floyd County Housing Team can provide input to DCA on proposed projects that would be located within the Rome-Floyd County limits. Any member organization (and/or their representative) on the Housing Team who has a vested interest in any LIHTC points request will need to abstain from any discussions or voting on the points allocation process.

DCA's funding award decisions are made on a point-based scoring system with specific criteria. Should they so elect, the Rome-Floyd Housing Team, may forward a letter of support endorsing one project for the current application cycle. Letters of support are highly coveted by project developers because it results in two scoring points being awarded to the application/project. Commonly referred to as the GICH Letter, the correspondence states that the project is located within the established boundaries and meets the communities affordable housing goals.

Due to the importance of such a letter of support from Rome and/or Floyd County, the following criteria shall apply to projects proposed for location within the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Rome and Floyd County. Requests for a letter of support shall be submitted to the Community Development Department in the form of a GICH Point Application and shall include:

### **Development & Management Experience**

- History managing LIHTC projects, examples of past projects (ideally, with contact information), non-LIHTC affordable housing projects, staff experience with LIHTC or other affordable housing projects
- Prior development experience as it relates to the proposed project site
- Success with previous LIHTC projects in Rome-Floyd County or other communities

### **Proposed Development, Location & Consistency with Local Priorities**

- Description of how your LIHTC proposal is consistent with local affordable housing priorities and needs
- Proposed concept or site plan and a written statement highlighting specific design attributes and land uses
- Project budget to include funding resources
- Description of any energy efficient measures that will be used at the property

### **Community Engagement, Partnerships & Accessibility**

- Citizen input plan for obtaining input from residents affected by your proposed project (relevant groups may include: current residents in proposed site, residents of surrounding neighborhoods, community organizations, and any other relevant community stakeholders)
- Proposed site's proximity to public transportation, recreation areas, and other amenities
- Description of partnerships with local affordable housing stakeholders

### **References**

- Two references from previous LIHTC developments and/or projects

The Rome-Floyd County Housing Team realizes that development-related activity is a fluid process. In order to thoroughly review all materials and request any additional information or clarification, it is required that the application/information requested in this letter be submitted not later than 5:00 p.m. on **March 31, 2026**.

Questions and completed applications need to be directed to Suzanne Parris, [sparris@romeqa.us](mailto:sparris@romeqa.us), (706) 236-4477.