

City of Gainesville ForEveryoneHome Initiative Application

Bios

City Commissioner Gigi Simmons has been a Gainesville resident for more than 40 years and she has spent a significant portion of that time living in the Porters neighborhood. Her family has lived in the Gainesville area for more than five generations. After earning a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of South Florida, Commissioner Simmons returned to Gainesville and devoted her passion and energy to her family and to building healthy communities in both the Porters neighborhood and in East Gainesville.

Commissioner Simmons brings a variety of experiences to her work. She has served the local community as a mother, a business owner, a volunteer, a president of the Porters Community Neighborhood Organization, and most recently, as a Gainesville City Commissioner. Her work centers on increasing social, political, and economic opportunities for local African American communities. She is a true believer in harnessing the power of community to solve local challenges.

Carla Lewis-Miles is a strong communicator and avid community activist with an associate's degree in Allied Health. As a nurse, she worked in urological oncology for two years before taking a job with Habitat for Humanity. Currently she serves as the Neighborhood Revitalization Coordinator/Critical Home Repair Specialist for Alachua Habitat for Humanity. She is responsible for creating pathways to improving housing infrastructure while implementing quality of life improvements in neighborhoods at risk for gentrification.

As a volunteer, Mrs. Lewis-Miles started the Greater Duval Neighborhood Association and worked in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity to incorporate the Association as a non-profit organization. She is currently a program developer as well as the Board of Director's Chief Executive Officer. She volunteers with the City of Gainesville as a member of the Utility Advisory Board and Wild Spaces Public Places Oversight Committee. Additionally, she works in partnership with the Community Weatherization Coalition as a board member and energy coach, and sustains partnerships with local non-profits, such as Working Food, the Cultural Arts Coalition, the Lydia B. Stokes Foundation, and other organizations that are committed to community economic development.

Stephen Weeks moved to Gainesville two years ago to serve as the Alachua County, Florida Housing Director. Mr. Weeks is responsible for overseeing grant applications and contract materials, preparing and recommending County policies and procedures for housing programs, and establishing and maintaining relationships with local, state, and federal housing officials.

Mr. Weeks brings a master's degree in accounting and finance, master's and undergraduate degrees in management, and over 30 years of experience to Alachua County. He has worked as a consultant under entitlement communities and small cities through his former consulting firm, *Weeks Construction and Government Funding Specialist, Inc.* Additionally, he possesses a State of Florida license as a general contractor. Mr. Weeks has extensive familiarity with Community Development Block Grant,

State Housing Initiatives Partnership, Emergency Solutions Grants, and Home Investment Partnerships programs.

Helen Harris is a native of Gainesville. She attended local public schools and graduated from Buchholz High School in 1984. She then graduated with Honors from Santa Fe College and from the University of Florida with a bachelor of arts in political science.

Ms. Harris has held various positions in a wide array of private and public sector organizations. She worked for over 14 years as the Gainesville City Manager's Office Coordinator under the leadership of four City Managers. In this capacity, she coordinated and provided technical assistance to the City Manager's office. Aspiring to further her leadership abilities, she accepted to serve as the Interim Housing & Community Development (HCD) Supervisor in 2018. As the Interim HCD Supervisor, Ms. Harris manages the City's comprehensive housing programs to provide an array of housing programming and services that are needed to promote affordable homeownership and neighborhood sustainability throughout the City of Gainesville.

Anne Wolf is the City of Gainesville's Community Engagement Program Manager. She creates and implements engagement strategies to support departments throughout the organization. Recently, she designed and led an affordable housing engagement strategy workshop that brought over a hundred community members and City staff together to identify and articulate a collaborative vision for housing and engagement priorities.

Dr. Wolf holds a doctorate in Rhetoric with an emphasis on racialized storytelling. Prior to joining the City, she worked for Alachua County's Public Schools, which are struggling to close one of the largest racial achievement gaps in the State of Florida. In that position, she served three functions. She worked to understand the experiences and concerns of African American parents and students. She shared information about the historical and contextual conditions that contributed to the existing racial achievement gap with teachers and administrators throughout the district, and she facilitated workshops on issues of race, racism, and education.

Dr. Wolf is keenly aware of the connections between the well-being of communities of color and access to safe and affordable housing. She is committed to ensuring that the perspectives and wisdom of these communities are central to the decision-making that impacts them.

Andrew Persons is a professional urban planner with over 15 years of experience working for local governments in the north and central Florida areas. He holds a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Florida and is currently the Interim Director of the Department of Doing where he oversees the City's Planning and Building Departments. As director, Mr. Persons is responsible for helping support local housing policy through the administration of the City's Comprehensive Plan and its Land Development Regulations. During his seven-year tenure with the City, he has witnessed a significant amount of infill development within the core of the City. While this new development supports the City's vision of a dense and walkable urban core, the economic benefits of the

current construction boom are often not experienced by communities of color where this new development is increasingly occurring. He is excited to explore strategies which encourage high-quality infill projects that strengthen these communities.

Team Narrative

Our team is comprised of representatives with a variety of experiences, knowledge bases, community connections, and power to make decisions. Together, our team spans four different departments, two government municipalities, three distinct organizations, multiple local neighborhoods, and decades of years of experience working on issues ranging from housing quality and access, to community planning and organizing. In order to prevent displacement of low-income communities of color in our city and county, this team will foster dialogue, inspire learning, and mobilize support from a wide range of partners, communities, and individuals.

Two of our team members are leaders in two different communities of color in Gainesville. Commissioner Gigi Simmons, has a dual role on the team as a leader within the Porters neighborhood, (a local African American community at risk of displacement), and as a City Commissioner. Carla Lewis-Miles, serves as the Neighborhood Revitalization Coordinator for Alachua Habitat for Humanity as well as a leader in a historically African American community, the Greater Duval neighborhood.

Mrs. Lewis-Miles and Commissioner Simmons will engage with the communities most likely to be impacted by displacement and the current lack of affordable housing in the Gainesville area. Commissioner Simmons has community expertise and understands the concerns of the Porters community. She will share information with community members, and work with her peers on the Commission to design policies. Ms. Harris will assist the team in serving as a conduit between the work of her department and low-income African American communities. Mr. Weeks will ensure that we attend to the connections between housing needs in the county as well as the City as we devise solutions for local housing challenges. Mr. Person's role on the team is to understand and identify ways that zoning and planning can help prevent displacement and contribute to our overall anti-displacement and affordable housing goals. Dr. Wolf will be responsible for designing and implementing effective engagement strategies around issues of affordable housing and displacement prevention.

Every member of our team is committed to creating meaningful change—through policies, programs, and community engagement—that will transform our community into a place where people of color are able to live in affordable homes within thriving neighborhoods. Our team is eager to learn about inclusive growth, sustainable affordable housing, and policies and strategies that will help us to prevent displacement. Moreover, as a team, we are equipped to ensure that as we build our collective awareness of housing affordability and sustainability, we are doing so in ways that have the power to make lasting change by centering the wisdom, experiences, and perspectives of low-income communities of color.

What policies and programs are already in place in your city to promote housing affordability and inclusive communities?

The City of Gainesville's goal for housing is to encourage a sufficient supply of adequate, decent, safe, healthy as well as affordable rental and owner-occupied housing for all income groups throughout the City. HCD channels federal, state, and local grant funding into programs that provide a broad range of housing services and programs. These programs seek to support the production and retention of both

affordable rental homes and homes for sale. Gainesville, through the State Housing Initiatives Partnership program, has access to dedicated funds with which to implement the city's housing plan. HCD has a reasonable amount of discretion over how to spend SHIP dollars and will be able to use them in order to implement the housing plan developed under the ForEveryoneHome program.

We promote rental affordability through programs and strategies to prevent displacement such as rental rehabilitation and funding for new construction rental units. We also support educational programming around issues of budget, credit, and debit management, and foster community awareness of programs to support renters and homeowners. Additionally, we provide assistance to community members seeking to purchase and maintain ownership of new homes. We accomplish this through the Down Payment Assistance Program for first-time homebuyers, homebuyer education workshops, the Mortgage Foreclosure Intervention Program, and credit repair opportunities.

We recognize the role that transportation plays in community inclusivity. Many residents of East Gainesville rely on our Regional Transit System (RTS) as their primary mode of transportation. In the past, community members have experienced the hardship of having to walk up to a mile from their homes to get to their bus route. We recently began a "first mile-last mile" program which uses shuttles to pick East Gainesville residents up from their homes and enables them to have rapid access to standard fixed route services. This program began on January 7th, 2019 with aspirations of offering rides to up to 20 passengers a day on each of two busses running 6 hours per day. The program has been highly successful, exceeding expectations for ridership with an average of 32.6 riders per bus per day. We hope to expand access and availability soon. RTS is run by the City of Gainesville rather than a county or regional authority and can support efforts to create better routing for those who rely on these services.

What displacement challenges does your community currently face or expect to face in the near future? How do housing cost and quality figure into these challenges? AWAITING CRA DATA

With a population of 132,249, the City of Gainesville is the largest municipality in Alachua County. Gainesville has seen a steadily growing population. There are two large educational institutions within Alachua County—Santa Fe College and the University of Florida—and a higher-than-average need for student housing. The Shimberg Center for Housing Studies estimates that about 32% of the City's population are students. According to recent American Community Survey data, 57.3% of the population identify as white, 22% identify as African American, 10.7% identify as Hispanic or Latino, 6.9% identify as Asian, and 3.8% identify as two or more or "other". The median household income within the City is \$34,005 and 33.6% of Gainesville residents are living in poverty.

The City has 53,200 total households, 82% of which are not student-headed. Renters' median income is \$23,000, while owners' median income is \$49,000. The distance between the earnings of renters and owners is increasing over time. Of all local households that are cost-burdened (paying more than 30% of their income for housing and utilities) 6% are owners and 33% are renters. For all non-student-headed households that are cost-burdened, 7% are owners and 30% are renters. While the fair market rent is \$894/month, with a median wage of \$15.95 per hour within the City of Gainesville, housing costs outpace wages for many local workers.

Inadequate supply of affordable housing has a disproportionate impact on local African American residents. From 2010 to 2016, according to the United Way ALICE report, the percent of households below the ALICE threshold (employed but income constrained) has increased from 48% to 50% in Alachua

County. While 43% of white households in Alachua County are considered employed but income constrained, 72% of African American households and more than 63% of Hispanic households are considered employed but income constrained. From 2012 to 2016, the percentage of white residents below poverty slightly decreased from 32% to 31%. African American residents living below poverty increased from 37% to 41%.

In Gainesville, there are four communities of color within two miles of the University of Florida that are currently experiencing displacement: Springhill, Porters, Pleasant Street, and Fifth Avenue. Each of these neighborhoods have served and continue to serve economic and social functions for African American communities in Gainesville. The Springhill neighborhood was established in 1884 and is home to the historic Cotton Club, which served as an entertainment venue for African American communities for several decades. Homes in the Porters neighborhood were once sold almost exclusively to African American laborers. The Pleasant Street neighborhood is the oldest African American neighborhood in Gainesville. Fifth Avenue is a historic business center for local African American communities. Additionally, one large region of town, East Gainesville, contains numerous historically African American neighborhoods that are likely to face development pressures in the near future.

Over the past ten to fifteen years, the City has invested considerable resources to improve facilities and services reaching these communities, through the efforts of our Community Redevelopment Agency and our Housing and Community Development Department. These efforts have served the intended goal of reducing blight and increasing investment potential. They have also encouraged developers to seek opportunities in these areas. As student housing and new residents move into historically African American neighborhoods, long-time residents of color are experiencing pressure to sell their homes and move elsewhere.

Over the past 10 years, housing in several low-income communities of color has seen a shift from owner-occupied residences to rental properties. In the Fifth Avenue neighborhood, for example, the conversion of owner-occupied to rental properties to single family properties is nearly double the rate city-wide. As Gainesville continues to develop and densify, these neighborhoods in the heart of town are expected to see further pressure from those looking to capitalize on the geographic location and enhanced public and private amenities in and around these areas.

Overall, housing costs are rising in Gainesville. Many new apartment complexes are being built, especially around the University of Florida campus. However, these are often luxury apartments aimed at students or wealthier residents. Moderately priced rental housing is lacking and when available, is older and more likely to be of lower quality. Our local Community Redevelopment Agency is shifting its efforts toward blight reduction and the attraction of new development in East Gainesville, a historically African American part of town. As this redevelopment occurs, it is reasonable to expect that the low-income communities of color in neighborhoods in East Gainesville could see an increase in displacement pressures.

Why do you wish to participate in the ForEveryoneHome initiative? How will participation help you achieve something we couldn't achieve on our own? (What are our goals for participation?)

The ForEveryoneHome program is a great opportunity to join a nationally-led effort to bring together experts and housing practitioners in a variety of cities who are working on a set of shared goals and similar challenges. Our team, with unanimous support from our City Commission and several

community partners, is excited to apply for this program. By participating in ForEveryoneHome, we will be able to achieve several outcomes that no single organization is likely to accomplish alone. These outcomes include cultivating strategies for broad based community participation and knowledge-building, the creation of a coalition of organizations and individuals focused on housing affordability and anti-displacement efforts, and the creation and implementation of policies and programs that address a specific area of housing need that has implications for broader affordability throughout the area. Ultimately, we are hoping to understand what strategies have been effective at ameliorating the damage done by segregated housing policies by creating opportunities for more diverse neighborhoods. We want to explore ways we can augment our existing development policies to factor racial equity into our decision-making framework and become a model for more inclusive growth and development.

The timing of this program is a great fit for the City of Gainesville because we have already started to create affordable housing strategies and are looking to expand some of the tools with which we have begun to work. The RFP/ForEveryoneHome Workplan document offers several strategies for creating lasting affordability and inclusive growth. Over the past few years, we have started considering and/or implementing many of these strategies. These include: preservation strategies for subsidized housing, non-traditional affordable housing models, inclusionary housing policies, land banks, and housing trust funds. We have begun creating momentum to make meaningful changes to our local housing landscape but we are also aware that there is more research and work to be done if we are going to turn the current momentum into sustainable affordable housing and inclusive growth.

This program will enable us to focus staff time on inclusive and effective engagement strategies around housing affordability and displacement prevention. The City of Gainesville has recently created a Citizen Engagement Program Manager position that is specifically designed to support the development of engagement strategies for departments throughout the City. ForEveryoneHome team member, Anne Wolf, was hired in October of 2018 to fill this role. Through her work she seeks to foster trust and build mutually beneficial relationships with communities that have been marginalized, in ways both intentional and unintentional, by systemic racism, throughout the course of our local history. It is rare that the members of our team are given a directive to specifically focus on and make space for working on housing issues from the perspective of fostering greater racial equity by working across organizations and communities. ForEveryoneHome will enable us to keep that priority at the center of our housing efforts.

In applying for this program, we are seeking to learn more about and implement innovative solutions to our local housing challenges. While this will be the case regardless of whether or not we are selected to participate in ForEveryoneHome, our participation in the program will give us the rare opportunity to pull together stakeholders—from both within the local community and outside of it—around a common goal over a sustained period of time. These stakeholders include community members living in low-income communities of color, community members living in a variety of single-family neighborhoods throughout the City, our local land trust—Communities That Care, and other local housing partners like Habitat for Humanity, Gainesville Housing Authority, and the Alachua Housing Authority, in addition to larger partner organizations like the University of Florida. All of these partnerships and their efforts to address local housing challenges will be strengthened from our participation in the ForEveryoneHome program.

Which current policies and programs would you like to re-examine or build-upon? Describe any research or groundwork already accomplished.

We would like to re-examine and build upon three main things. Firstly, we hope to re-examine strategies to create the affordable housing while ensuring that growth and development will not adversely affect the same groups it is trying to serve. Secondly, we would like to build upon our Comprehensive Plan in ways that support inclusive growth. Thirdly, we would like to build upon the relationships we have cultivated with partner organizations like the University of Florida and, more specifically, The Shimberg Center for Housing Studies. It is our hope that through all of these efforts, we can prevent future displacement, in both the communities currently experiencing displacement, as well as in communities likely to face displacement pressures in the near future.

In the fall of 2017, the City of Gainesville adopted a sweeping form-based code spanning most of the urbanized core of the City. The code, adopted after 5+ years of community discussion and debate, eliminated many of the remaining vestiges of Euclidian zoning that focused on separating uses into discreet areas of the City. The City's original proposal included rezoning many of the residential neighborhoods near downtown and the University of Florida but was subsequently withdrawn after lengthy discussions with neighborhood leaders about the potential for the zoning changes to spark gentrification and further exacerbate development pressures felt by vulnerable residents.

Unfortunately, withdrawing the rezoning proposal did little to ease the development pressures that continue to build within many historic neighborhoods in the City. To complicate the issue, the City is also grappling with a severe shortage of affordable housing units to serve households making less than 80% of the area median income. In an effort to address this shortfall, the City Commission directed the Planning Department to develop creative strategies to promote the creation of more available affordable housing in the City. Beginning in the fall of 2017 and culminating at the end of 2018, the City developed an incentive-based program named GNVRISE. The program was a matrix of regulatory incentives provided by the City in exchange for a permanent 10% set-aside of below market rate units (at or below 80% AMI). Regulatory incentives included increased density, smaller lots, more flexible infrastructure options, and the ability to add a small number of multifamily dwellings into areas that were exclusively zoned for single family homes.

The GNVRISE proposal generated a tremendous amount of communitywide discussion. Most of the negative feedback from various neighborhood groups centered around the potential incursion of multi-family homes into exclusive single-family neighborhoods. A smaller subset of this discussion centered around several smaller traditionally African American neighborhoods near downtown and the University, and the potential for GNVRISE to drive new development into vulnerable neighborhoods where naturally occurring affordable housing may already exist. Without an adequate solution to address the issues of displacement and development pressure, the proposal was abandoned in favor of giving time for a more holistic discussion of affordable housing needs, informed by those individuals who are most in need. Even though GNVRISE was abandoned, the process of creating and discussing this program with local community members served as a foundation for all of our future work around creating more favorable conditions for the development of sustainably affordable housing.

Additional groundwork that we would like to build upon involves our Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is the overarching framework that guides land development, housing access, affordability, dispersal, inclusivity, and rehabilitation. The plan encourages new development to occur within the center of the City in order to discourage the negative effects of urban sprawl. A major goal of upcoming updates to the plan is for the City to ensure access to safe and affordable housing for all

income levels in all areas of the community. The City has been challenged on how to effectively implement specific strategies to meet these broad policy goals. As an example, by most measures the City has been successful at encouraging new infill development, however, it has been largely unsuccessful at establishing strategies to ensure that this development is inclusive and does not adversely affect the housing stability of existing residents.

Whereas several low income communities of color are already experiencing displacement pressure, the City of Gainesville is currently in a position to be proactive in creating affordable housing in low income communities of color throughout East Gainesville. While we continue to find ways of preventing further displacement in neighborhoods near the University of Florida, with the help of a newly formed local community land trust—Communities That Care—we look forward to proactively supporting the creation of affordable housing in neighborhoods throughout East Gainesville, including the Greater Duval, Lincoln Estates, and Springhill neighborhoods. We are also keen to increase our knowledge of programs and policies capable of creating safe, decent, affordable housing, and preserving existing housing stock throughout East Gainesville, the Porters neighborhood, the Fifth Avenue neighborhood, and the Pleasant Street neighborhood. To this end, we seek to expand our capacity to employ our rehabilitation programs in the service of maintaining affordability in neighborhoods at risk of displacement.

Additionally, we seek to expand our relationships with local housing partners including the University of Florida broadly and the Shimberg Center for Housing Studies more specifically. The Shimberg Center was one of the first centers in the country to create a comprehensive database of subsidized rental housing for the purpose of preserving affordability. The Center is currently advising the State of Florida on issues of preservation and is seeking to deepen their work within the City of Gainesville. Faculty within the Center have supported a number of community housing meetings by offering presentations, data, and ongoing support and advisement for the City's affordable housing efforts.

Other relationships with the University of Florida that we would like to build upon include our relationship to the University of Florida's College of Design, Construction & Planning. In 2018, with the assistance of staff from the City of Gainesville and faculty in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning (within the College of Design, Construction & Planning), residents and stakeholders from the historically African American Porters neighborhood created a neighborhood narrative. Such narratives are innovative tools to communicate what makes the neighborhood special and what should be protected in the face of development pressures. This neighborhood narrative was the result of a 15-month engagement process, led by a nine-member steering committee of Porters residents and stakeholders, including ForEveryoneHome team member Gigi Simmons, who was elected to the City Commission last May. Planning experts in the UF Department of Urban and Regional Planning initiated and facilitated the process and City planning staff participated and assisted the community work. We plan to build on this kind of work as we create our engagement plan. We are fortunate to live in a town with a large research university keen to expand partnerships with the City of Gainesville.

What new policies or programs are you considering pursuing? Describe any research or groundwork already accomplished.

Gainesville has a few different programs which focus on affordable housing development and helping residents with housing needs. Multiple goals, objectives, and policies within the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan address affordable housing and seek to ensure all citizens have access to safe, healthy, and affordable housing. We are considering policies that strengthen public support for affordable housing in low-income communities of color while directing infill development and long-range capital improvement to those areas.

In addition to this broad policy, HCD has various initiatives that help citizens rehabilitate, maintain, and purchase housing. Most programs focus on assisting homeowners, but there are programs directed at renters too. These services are important because they help low-income residents keep their housing. Though these programs are extremely helpful, many residents are not aware of the options or that they may qualify. Further outreach to the public could help with participation in these programs.

Various long-range capital improvement projects have been implemented to reduce blight and encourage redevelopment in historically African American communities. It is important to keep these sorts of projects going in the future, but it is necessary for the City to work with residents to ensure that new investment is not displacing them. We want to collaboratively reexamine existing public investment projects and build upon them in ways that foster resiliency and encourage equitable planning and infill development. Continuing to encourage dense infill development is important for Gainesville, but the City must do a better job of limiting the displacement pressures these place on historic communities of color.

In order to promote sustainable growth while ensuring housing affordability, we are considering innovative approaches to engagement. We have covered a fair amount of ground in this area, and learned many things, particularly from the process of developing and abandoning the GNVRISE program. Most importantly, any successful outcome will need to be driven by a broader community discussion. In the past, we have devised solutions and then taken them to the public for approval. At this point, we have shifted our course to a more citizen-centered focus. Rather than presenting fully formed solutions to the public, we are creating strategies for building a common language and understanding of the historical and present context of local housing needs. By doing this, we hope to increase community capacity to collaborate in finding solutions to housing challenges by ensuring that community members are making decisions with City staff at multiple stages of the process.

[What prepares your community to have an exemplary community engagement process that reaches low-income communities of color in your city?](#)

The City has recently taken several steps to increase our capacity for effective community engagement and collaboration. As an organization, we are prioritizing building relationships with local community members by increasing transparency, meeting people where they are, and creating processes that facilitate collaborative decision-making. Additionally, we are aware that our federal, state, and local history is filled with exclusionary practices that have marginalized communities of color. We have therefore built a focus on equity into our strategic framework. As a result of these efforts, the City of Gainesville is well-positioned to have an exemplary community engagement process that reaches low-income communities of color.

In response to community concerns about transparency and inclusion in our processes of decision-making, the City is currently developing an overarching framework for engagement. Much of this work is being directed by ForEveryoneHome team member, Anne Wolf, who is working to develop

strategies for engagement that can be shared across departments within the City. Some of these strategies include increasing the creativity and connectivity of youth engagement, building relationships with and among demographically diverse local stakeholders, and increasing local capacity for building a shared vision and collaborating in processes of informed decision-making. The goal of all of these efforts is to center the experiences and knowledge of communities most impacted by the policies, programs, and infrastructure that the City creates.

Describe existing relationships, experience with past outreach efforts (*both successes and lessons learned), and available resources.

Staff within the City of Gainesville maintain ongoing relationships with homeowners, renters, housing providers, real estate professionals, developers, home inspectors, insurance providers, local lenders, and local researchers. All of these relationships are essential for addressing local affordable housing issues, needs, and concerns of local community members.

While past engagement efforts have yielded mixed results, the City, as an organization, continues to learn, grow, and adapt with each effort. One of the City of Gainesville's more successful engagement efforts has been HCD's recurring Affordable Housing EXPO, which brings together interested community members within local communities of color and key players from across the local housing landscape to share information about available resources. Affordable Housing EXPOs have been widely attended by families of color and housing organizations alike. One of the most important things we have learned from these EXPOs is that we need to attend to both the informative potential of the engagement opportunities we create, as well as the social potential for events to be fun and to enable people to connect with one another.

Other attempts at engagement have led to helpful insights for our future work on housing affordability. For example, in a recent attempt to create a voluntary inclusionary zoning program to harness the power of the market to create affordable housing (GNVRISE), our engagement efforts were deemed unsuccessful in many ways. Many community members felt mistrustful of the intent behind the program. Many other community members expressed concerns that they did not fully understand the complexities of the program. Other communities, still, expressed concerns that the program would promote displacement and/or destroy the character of their neighborhoods.

Ultimately, the GNVRISE policy initiative was rejected by our City Commission, but the process of engagement around the program taught us three crucial lessons. First, we need to actively engage communities across the city earlier and more frequently in order to share our work and get feedback and direction from local residents to inform next steps. Second, we need to create opportunities to increase our collective knowledge and understanding about the historical and present forces that create local housing challenges, as well as constraints and sites of possibility for housing solutions. Third, we need to create opportunities for community members to come together to create practical shared goals and solutions regarding housing affordability and anti-displacement efforts.

What are the biggest barriers your community faces in advancing a displacement prevention strategy?

Gainesville faces three key barriers against advancing a displacement prevention strategy. First, there is lack of consensus on how the problem of displacement is defined. Many citizens in Gainesville are unaware of how displacement pressures impact people in the community. There is a lack of local

recognition of the challenges faced by long-time residents of color in those neighborhoods. Second, there is limited agreement on which policy efforts should be implemented to combat displacement. Though it is important to offer a variety of programs to help citizens with different needs, it seems that policy makers and residents have difficulty agreeing on what the key next steps to take to combat displacement should be. Third, there is a lack of trust among communities of color who feel that their input will not be used in developing solutions. Many of these communities have been marginalized and ignored in the past. In order to have success, their ideas and opinions must be heard.

What help could the ForEveryoneHome initiative offer to overcome those barriers?

ForEveryoneHome would help Gainesville overcome barriers for advancing a displacement prevention strategy by creating increased opportunities for research into challenges and solutions these neighborhoods face. A criticism of efforts taken by city government in the past has been that proposed policy measures or other actions lacked data or examples of successful implementations. By being able to work with researchers and other cities, we will have access to more information to inform our decisions and guide our policy directives. We would also benefit from improved community outreach and engagement strategies built into the ForEveryoneHome initiative. Ensuring everyone in the community, especially the communities of color most at risk of displacement, has the ability to be involved in the process will dramatically improve understanding and hopefully lead to outcomes with a wide base of support.

What successful or innovative local policies would you like to teach your peers in other cities about?

There are problems of displacement specific to university towns. In Gainesville, displacement most often looks like the encroachment of student housing. Grounded Solutions Network could help us to develop a model specific to these types of towns. This model would include local policies aimed at displacement prevention within a town-gown context. It would also include processes and tools for partnerships between local researchers and local housing and planning practitioners. We would like to develop this model here and share it with other cities facing similar challenges. We also aspire to be able to share design-based, racial equity-centered community engagement practices with other towns of similar sizes experiencing similar challenges.

What local policies would you be most interested in learning about from a peer city?

With our CRA, our city has worked to reduce blight and has invested in under-resourced communities. Our success in attracting investment and development has, unfortunately, placed pressure on the same communities we are trying to support. The sudden influx of public investment into these areas has been quickly followed by significant private investment thereby increasing land values and leading longtime residents to sell family property to investors looking to capitalize on the new public infrastructure.

In the Porters, Fifth Avenue, and Pleasant Street neighborhoods, where displacement has already been occurring and property values have increased, developers are inclined to create market rate rental housing. For this reason, we would like to know how other communities have attracted investment in affordable rental housing. We are also curious to know more about local funding sources like housing trusts, millage rates, and sales taxes to support the creation and maintenance of affordable housing.

We are concerned that as upcoming CRA investment expands toward East Gainesville, this will create similar displacement pressures. We are eager to learn about and implement anti-displacement policies that have been effective in other locations. Ultimately, we are looking to find a replicable framework of interventions to enable the City and partner organizations to create social and/or programmatic infrastructure that can strengthen local, historically African American, low-income neighborhoods while enabling current residents to continue living and thriving in them.

Additionally, we are aware that community land trusts have been a powerful tool for creating lasting affordability in other cities. We also know that cities can play a large role in the success of local community land trusts. We are interested in learning about any policies or programs that nurture the relationship between land trusts, community members, and cities. We are keen to ensure that, as a city, we are supporting our newly formed land trust to the greatest extent possible.

What support would we like to request of Grounded Solutions Network to fundraise for any remaining gap in funding for the 75k match?

We have currently identified \$15k in our budget from this year's fiscal year to devote to the \$75k match. If selected to participate in ForEveryoneHome, we will return to our budget and request additional funding support from the University of Florida and other local funders. If Grounded Solutions Network is aware of any additional funding opportunities, it would be tremendously helpful to us to be made aware of them.

Do any community representatives on the core team necessitate additional financial support to fully participate (separate from the required match funding)?

A couple of our team members may experience financial hardship depending on the duration of travel time required by the program. If we are selected to participate, Grounded Solutions Network could assist us in finding any state or local funding that we might be eligible to apply for.

Do we have any planning documents, housing reports or other similar items that support our application? Plus a brief description of their relevance?

Map of neighborhoods: This is a map identifying the locations of historically African American neighborhoods in Gainesville that are facing development pressure and development risk.

Strategic Framework: The strategic Framework has a focus on fostering greater equity by strengthening neighborhoods, providing equitable services, and supporting access to housing. In FY2019, the City Commission also allocated more than \$3.5 million to supporting city employee living wages and more than \$480 thousand to vitalize the availability and dispersion of affordable housing.

Guide to strategic priorities: This document is a supplement to our Strategic Framework.

BEHR report on Racial Inequities in Alachua County: This document outlines local racial disparities in the following areas: economic well-being, housing and transportation, education, involvement in the criminal justice system, and health outcomes.

Housing Element: This is the portion of the comp plan that addresses housing priorities.

Consolidated plan: This tells us how much federal money (CDBG and HOME) we have gotten, how much we expect to get, and how we think it would be best to spend it.

Shimberg Rental Housing Study: The Shimberg Center's Rental Market Needs Study provides information on state and local rental housing availability.

Local Housing Assistance Plan: Our Local Housing Assistance Plan outlines the amount of SHIP funding we have received, how much we expect to receive, and how we think it would be best to spend it.