

City of Gainesville One City Community Relations Plan

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Date: March 22, 2022

The Office of Government Affairs and Community Relations (GACR) maintains positive working relationships with community and neighborhood-based organizations, our neighbors, elected and appointed officials – at all levels, and other public agencies. We are the City’s ambassadors in the community and work tirelessly to ensure Gainesville becomes an equitable and sustainable community that is a great place to live and experience.

Our goals are:

- To be a reliable, dedicated resource to our community
- To be recognized as a trusted community leader/advocate
- To lead action that addresses and alleviates issues in our community (*help our neighbors to find their voice*)
- To empower our neighbors to be actively involved in civic matters

GACR is the link between our City government and Gainesville neighbors. GACR also serves as a consultant to each City department for their governmental affairs and community relations needs, with a particular focus on community engagement and outreach. We build and maintain relationships with community shareholders by employing equitable and inclusive community engagement.

Community Relations Core Services

Community Outreach – programming, both educational and empowering, that City staff develops and hosts in the community

- Community F.I.R.S.T. (**F**acilitative – **I**nnovative – **R**estorative – **S**upportive – **T**imely)
- City Services Fair*
- Youth Mentor Fair*
- City Hall 101*
- Community engagement event to showcase city services and gather community input for strategic plan priorities
- Employee Volunteer Network (EVN)
- GRU in the Neighborhood
- Engi-Near You (partnerships with Society of Women Engineers “SWE” and Jacobs)
- Camp EmPOWER
- Brighter Tomorrow Scholarship Program
- Williams Elementary – school partner for 25 years

- Talk show (re: City services and programs)*

| Program | Frequency | Notes |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| Community F.I.R.S.T. | on-going | Initial kickoff in Porters; additional neighborhoods: Springtree/Hazel Heights, Sugar Hill, University Park (including Florida Park), Pine Ridge, Greater Duval, 5 th Avenue/Pleasant Place |
| City Services Fair* | 4 per fiscal year | 2 for FY 22 |
| Youth Mentor Fair* | 1 per year | |
| City Hall 101* | 1 cohort per year | |
| Community Engagement (strategic plan) | 1 per year | |
| Talk Show | as needed | Will include information on City services and programs, discussion with City Officials and staff, spotlights on staff and community members |
| Employee Volunteer Network (EVN) | as opportunities are available | |
| GRU in the Neighborhood | 4-6 per fiscal year | |
| Engi-Near You (partnerships with Society of Women Engineers "SWE" and Jacobs) | 4 per school year | |
| Camp EmPOWER | 1 per year | |
| Brighter Tomorrow Scholarship Program | 1 per year | |
| Williams Elementary – GRU partner school for 25 years | various | programs include: golf tournament, teacher appreciation, school carnival, 5th grade and kindergarten graduations |

*Currently in development

Community Engagement – We define engagement as a critical process for building trust between community members and the City of Gainesville that entails involving community members in city problem solving and decision making. By interacting with the community and making use of community input, we are able to make sustainable decisions that reflect the communities we serve. We do this by receiving critical feedback from the community and working together to develop plans that benefit everyone involved. In our efforts to foster positive relationships between City and neighbors, we:

- Host meetings to educate community about City projects, programs, and policies
- Engage with neighbors to learn the needs, issues, history, accomplishments, and successes of the community
- Foster enhanced communication between the City and the community, and serves as an advocate to neighbors by addressing community questions and concerns
- Cultivate neighbor involvement in civic engagement
- myGNV
- Work with departments to ensure their community programming delivery is efficient and effective
- Assist departments in developing and hosting specialized community engagement/community education meetings on specific projects/proposals (ex: Cultural Arts Center, Eastside Clinic, Fire Station 1, Climate Change/Sustainability initiatives, Power District, South Main St, etc.)

All of the practices mentioned above support the city's department in making inclusively-informed decisions that combine valuable community-knowledge and wisdom with the subject matter expertise of city staff and the leadership of our elected officials.

Community Partnerships – working alongside community groups, civic organizations, faith-based community, neighborhoods, social justice teams, volunteer groups, and other non-profit organizations to address prevailing issues in the community

- Attend/participate in neighborhood meetings, including the 70 crime watch coalitions in Gainesville
- Serve on boards, as thought-leaders, and co-equal partners in working towards Gainesville's quest to be a thriving, equitable, resilient community
- Support the work of community partners seeking to build resilient communities and promote active public participation
- Find, create and maintain opportunities to provide funding to support community-based projects that foster community resiliency

Community Investments – investing in the community by sponsoring events and programs that promote Gainesville as a great place to live and experience.

Some programs include:

- Community Cultivators: a program that funds community participants in neighborhood-specific engagement processes

- Imagine GNV neighborhoods: a program that designates Gainesville neighborhoods to develop community-driven projects and provide planning and technical support as needed
- Faith-Based Partnership Initiative: a program that strengthens relationships within local communities and between city staff and community members by building relationships and leveraging the power of existing relationships

Neighbor/Community advocacy – work with departments to resolve neighbor and community issues/concerns

- Triage and address complaints/issues that reach the office of the City Manager and/or General Manager
- Manage and follow up on neighbor issues/concerns that are reported via myGNV, as needed
- Serve as the voice of the community among City leaders and staff

Service Delivery

1. Our core services will be administered by GACR staff, working with GG/GRU departments.
 - a. There will be a working group consisting of a liaison from each department.
 - b. Working group will have regular meetings (monthly, or as appropriate).
2. GACR staff will be cross trained to handle community relations core services for all departments/across Charters.
3. Core services will be delivered to neighbors in variety of ways.
 - a. As a part of GACR normal calendar of events (see table of frequency of community outreach events)
 - b. In response to department need/request
 - c. In response to Commission directive to Charters
4. GACR support of departments' outreach and engagement goals will be individualized, based on their need.
 - a. GACR will meet with department to gain understanding of program/policy/issue that needs community engagement
 - b. GACR will work with department to develop specialized plan
 - c. GACR will assist with execution of community engagement work plan for program/policy/issue