



APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN 2026

The Georgia Economic Placemaking Collaborative (GEPC) is a two-year place-based economic development program that provides participating communities with education, facilitation, technical assistance, networking, peer learning, and incentives to help identify their community assets and develop a locally based placemaking strategy.

YEAR ONE: education, visioning, and planning.

YEAR TWO: development projects, funding, implementation, and impact analysis.

The Community Teams: The Georgia Economic Placemaking Collaborative emphasizes the importance of equitable and inclusive community engagement in the development project process. The Collaborative is designed to work for cities with differing demographics. The participating cities vary in size, population, racial makeup, and socio-economic status.

Assembling a diverse community team is required for cities to participate in the Collaborative. Each community team consists of elected officials, city staff, members of downtown development organizations, chambers of commerce, faith-based organizations, local associations, business owners/operators, and residents. The Collaborative assists the community teams in identifying projects that reflect the unique cultural and historic character of the community.

Letter of Intent: Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a letter of intent by October 31, 2025. Please describe the circumstances that led you to the decision to apply for the GEPC program. This may include quality of life issues facing your community, current partnerships and downtown projects that are underway, or recent planning and development efforts.

Application Submittal: Electronic Submittal is required and should be sent to tbradshaw@gacities.com.

Certification & Acknowledgment of Responsibilities: The chief elected official of the city must certify that the information is correct, and that the community will assemble a Community Team that represents the community's demographics and culture, and fully participate in the program if chosen.

Dates and Deadlines: Your application must be received via email by 5:00 PM on Monday December 8, 2025 to be considered for participation in the Georgia Placemaking Collaborative. Late applications may not be accepted.

Application Announcement

September 2, 2025

Letter of Intent Due

October 31, 2025

Application Deadline

December 8, 2025

Selection Announcement

December 30, 2025

SECTION A – *Applicant Information*

1. The applicant organization must be a city. Provide the name and address of the city applying for participation. The city will be the lead fiscal agent for the Community Team.

Name of City: _____

Address: _____

2. Provide the name and contact information of the primary person and the secondary person that will be the contact for activities of the Community Team and questions about the application. Indicate which person will be Team Leader. The Team Leader is expected to be committed to the full two-year life of the program and to coordinate team meeting arrangements, work schedules, fiscal matters, and to generally keep the team on task and motivated.

Primary Contact Person: _____ Title: _____

Organization: _____

Email Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Secondary Contact Person: _____ Title: _____

Organization: _____

Email Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Indicate who is the Team Leader: Primary Contact ☐ or Secondary Contact ☐

Who will be financially responsible for participation fees?

Name: _____ Title: _____

Organization: _____

Email Address: _____ Telephone: _____

The GEPC is a team participation and results driven program. Communities will be responsible for an annual participation fee, covering the costs of travel and lodging for its Community Team members to participate in the planning retreats and associated team activities, and providing project implementation funding.

The estimated costs per team will be:

- **Annual Program Participation Fee:** This cost will be \$500 each year for two (2) years for a total of \$1000.
- **Yearly Travel Costs:** Costs will consist of travel to a Spring and Fall one-day retreat, which may require an overnight stay, depending on distance from your community. Lunches will be provided during the retreat but not dinners. Most hotels offer continental breakfast. For initial planning purposes, assume that conference hotel rooms may cost between \$120 and \$170 per night. Your travel costs will vary depending on the number of team members attending and the distance of the retreats from your community.
- **Other Costs:** Any costs incurred by the Community Team between retreat sessions, will be the responsibility of the community. These costs should be negligible and based on decisions the team makes about meetings involving meals, local staff time devoted to meetings and meeting preparation, and other related expenses. These costs and funding sources do not need to be included on this application form.
- **Project Implementation Funding:** During the program the teams will identify issues and potential projects to be implemented. Please list any funds that could be utilized for such projects that you currently have access to or could have access to during the length of the program.

There are many ways in which program costs can be covered such as: City, DDA, Main Street Program, Chamber of Commerce, private businesses, churches, or nonprofit organization sponsorships. The community might also wish to raise funds locally (e.g., local government, financial institution, local foundation, crowdsource funding, etc.).

Please demonstrate your fiscal ability to participate in GEPC by completing the chart below:

	GEPC Program Funding Source(s)	Amount	Status (Requested or Allocated)
Year 1			
Year 2			

	Potential or Known Project Implementation Funding Source(s)	Amount	Status (Requested or Allocated)
Year 1			
Year 2			
Post Program			

SECTION B - *Community Team*

Broad community representation and dedicated member participation on the team is vital to developing and implementing an effective placemaking plan. The team should consist of 6 to 10 individuals and include a variety of community stakeholders. **Each Community Team must include: a team leader, a local elected official, a city staff member, and a minimum of four community stakeholders.** The Community Team will agree to consistently participate with the group by attending all retreats and local meetings. Team members could include members of the Downtown Development Authority or other Authority/Agency, city staff, local business owners, and residents who represent the city's demographics. Team members are encouraged to read the downtown component of their local comprehensive plan and to be knowledgeable about their city's vision and strategic plan.

List the members of your Community Team in the chart on the following page. These will be the people who attend the GEPC activities and who are committed to working on the community's placemaking issues and objectives. In addition to giving the person's name, title, and organizational affiliation, each person is required to sign the application. If someone has not yet confirmed but has been invited, write "invited" in the signature column for that person.

Community Team Member Proposed Chart

More than one Elected Official and City Staff person may be a member of the Core Group.
Please list additional Elected and/or City staff under one of the Member slots.

Group Member	Name	Title	Affiliation	Signature
1. Elected Official*				
2. City Staff*				
3. Stakeholder				
4. Stakeholder				
5. Stakeholder				
6. Stakeholder				
7. Member				
8. Member				
9. Member				
10. Member				
11. Member				
12. Member				
13. Member				

SECTION C – *Community Information*

1. Please provide documentation of local government support for participation in the GEPC. Evidence of local government support includes allocations of budgeted funds, pledges of staff support, letters of support, and/or Council/Commission resolutions. Attach documentation to the application.
2. Describe the primary issues facing the community. In evaluating the adequacy and suitability of projects to serve current and future community needs, you may consider the following factors: quality of life, business recruitment/retention, transportation and walk-ability, historic and cultural preservation, blight, community and youth engagement, education, infrastructure, etc. Attach your response (up to two pages) to the application, as well as any completed downtown or city studies, maps or other information that may be helpful for the selection committee.
3. Describe any projects, completed or underway, that showcase a unique aspect(s) of your community. Activities described might include downtown revitalization and tourism efforts, public art projects, branding, historic preservation, parks and recreation initiatives, placemaking initiatives, and community stakeholder/engagement activities. Attach your response (up to one page) to the application.
4. Briefly describe why your community wishes to participate in the Georgia Economic Placemaking Collaborative, what you expect as an outcome from your community's participation, and how this work fits into the community's current initiatives, goals, and plans. Attach your response (up to one page) to the application.
5. Has your community completed an asset inventory in the past three years?
No ☐ Yes ☐ If yes, please describe the scope, target area, funding, etc.:

6. Has your community worked with your Regional Commission on community/economic development activities in the past 5 years?

No ☐ Yes ☐ If yes, please describe:

7. What are your City's Development Tools? (Please check all that apply in each category)

Does the City have any of the following downtown development programming?

- ☐ Designated Main Street City. If yes, how long? _____ What Tier? _____
- ☐ Downtown Development Program Manager. If yes, is this a full-time position? _____
What is your Program Manager's name? _____
- ☐ Other type of Downtown Development Program. Please describe _____

Does the City have any of the following authorities or commissions?

- ☐ Active Downtown Development Authority.
- ☐ Historic Preservation Commission.
- ☐ Urban Redevelopment Agency.
- ☐ City Development Authority
- ☐ Joint City/County Development Authority
- ☐ Other _____

Does the City have any of the following development plans or recent studies?

- ☐ Downtown Master Plan. What year was it completed? _____
- ☐ Comprehensive Plan. What year was it updated? _____
- ☐ Urban Redevelopment Plan. What year was it completed? _____
- ☐ Livable Centers Initiative. What year was it completed? _____
- ☐ Other Plans. If so, what? _____ Year completed? _____
- ☐ Plan First Designation. Year received? _____

Does the City have any of the following development designations or incentives?

- ☐ Special Tax District, CID, or BID. If Yes, which one(s)? _____
- ☐ Tax Allocation District.
- ☐ Designated Rural Zone.
- ☐ Enterprise Zone.
- ☐ Local Opportunity Zone.
- ☐ Federal Opportunity Zone.
- ☐ Downtown Overlay District.
- ☐ PlanFirst Community.
- ☐ Qualified Local Government.
- ☐ Arts and/or Entertainment District.
- ☐ Historic Preservation District.
- ☐ Downtown Incentive Ordinance.
- ☐ Facade Grant Program.
- ☐ Other Development Grant or Incentive Program(s). Please Specify: _____

8. Has your community participated in the following programs?

- ☐ Archway Partnership. If so, when? _____
- ☐ Georgia Downtown Renaissance Programs (RSVP, Fellowship, Urban Design Studio).
If so, when? _____
- ☐ Georgia Initiative for Community Housing. If so, when? _____
- ☐ Tourism Product Development Team. If so, when? _____
- ☐ Georgia Conservancy. If so, what program? _____
- ☐ Georgia Power C.R.E.A.T.E. Program. If so, when? _____
- ☐ Other. Please describe: _____

SECTION D – *Certification*

Organization - The Community Team must include a representation of your community's demographics and culture. Communities are expected to:

- Develop a plan to assure the team remains reflective of your community's demographic, which includes a means of replacing non-participants or team member resignations. Furthermore, the team must continue to seek out new members when need arises.
- Each team must have a Core Group that includes: a team leader, a local elected official, a city staff member, and a minimum of four community stakeholders.
- Notify the GEPC program coordinator when team leader (or primary or secondary contact persons) change.

Attendance & participation - Dedicated team member participation on the Community Team at the biannual retreats and local meetings is vital for meaningful facilitated discussion and developing and implementing an effective placemaking plan.

- The Community Team will agree to consistently participate with the group by attending all retreats and local meetings. This also includes giving report back presentations on progress at every retreat, starting in the spring of the first year.
- Create and adhere to a local meeting schedule to continue plan development and implementation between retreats. Communities are encouraged to keep records.

Product - The GEPC program partners with communities to improve their quality of life and economic vitality through the development of locally based placemaking and revitalization strategies.

Communities are expected to:

- Develop a plan working with their facilitator during retreat work sessions.
- Continue to refine and amend the plan during local meetings.
- Take steps to implement action items.
- Assure sustainability of plan by developing future action items and securing funding.
- Maintain electronic copies of the up-to-date working plan. This is the responsibility of the local team leader.

To the best of my knowledge the information in this application is true and correct. By signing below, the official representative of the applicant certifies these statements and acknowledges the above responsibilities of program participation:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of official representative (please print): _____

Title: _____