



# The Insider Update

Community Housing News

Volume 4 Number 3 - March 2026

## Why CHSA? CHSA Creates Housing Opportunities



Community Housing Services Agency, Inc. (CHSA) is a local nonprofit—**not a government agency**—dedicated to increasing housing investments and expanding the supply of affordable and workforce housing. We serve modest-wage households in Chatham County. As the lead agency for the Housing United Initiative, CHSA brings together public, private, and philanthropic partners to address our community's housing needs.

Through strategic fundraising and targeted investments, CHSA generates the funding to develop and preserve housing that is accessible to all individuals and families. This vital work will ensure that Chatham County remains a place where people of all income levels can live and thrive.

CHSA is an independent nonprofit (EIN 58-1850981) and a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). We finance the creation and

preservation of housing for modest-income households across Chatham County.

### **What is a CDFI?**

CDFI's are mission-driven financial institutions certified by the [U.S. Department of the Treasury's CDFI Fund](#) to expand economic opportunity in underserved communities, particularly those with limited access to affordable housing and capital. CHSA became a CDFI in 2017.

### **What services does CHSA provide?**

CHSA provides technical assistance to property owners and developers, secures and deploys investments for larger programs, and facilitates home repair and down payment assistance programs. CHSA also connects developers with loan and grant capital to build and preserve affordable and workforce housing.

### **How is CHSA funded?**

CHSA's work is made possible through investments from government agencies, foundations, businesses, and individuals. As a [CDFI](#), CHSA raises loan capital, grants, and operational funding.

### **Why does CHSA lead the Housing United Initiative?**

CHSA was selected to lead the Housing United Initiative based on its long-standing track record of impact and collaboration. Since 1989, CHSA has partnered with local governments, nonprofits, lenders, developers, and community stakeholders to create and preserve thousands of affordable and workforce housing units.

Since 2012, CHSA has successfully administered the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund, managing millions of dollars in investments. CHSA is also a member of the Opportunity Finance Network and the African American Alliance of CDFI CEOs and is pursuing an Aeris rating in 2026.

### **What will the Housing United Initiative support?**

CHSA will coordinate county-wide funding strategies, prioritize high-impact development opportunities, support projects already in the pipeline, and leverage public and private investments to expand regional housing production. Programs include home repair, down payment assistance, heirs' property legal funding, infill construction, and development financing.



### **What is the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF)?**

The SAHF funds programs that create housing opportunities and retain existing homes for households with modest incomes. CHSA has administered the SAHF since it was formed in 2012. The City of Savannah has invested over \$24M in the

SAHF, and with CHSA's help, leveraged \$136M+ in additional capital to create 2045 housing units.

### **What is the CHSA Loan Fund?**

The CHSA Loan Fund consists of unrestricted funding that can be deployed by CHSA for any project. The CHSA Loan Fund also administers [program-related investments from foundations or individuals](#). CHSA's Heirs' Property Program is funded through the CHSA Loan Fund.

### **What is the Housing United Chatham Fund (HUCF)?**

The [Housing United Chatham Fund](#) was established by the CHSA Board of Directors in 2026 to coordinate and manage funds raised to invest in housing opportunities throughout Chatham County.

### **Do other municipalities have affordable housing funds under the HUCF umbrella?**

Yes! Chatham County and each municipality has a named fund open to both public and private contributions to support housing opportunities. [Donate here!](#)

### **Who oversees the loan fund disbursements administered by CHSA?**

CHSA convenes several loan committees to approve routine program disbursements for the SAHF, HUCF, and the CHSA Loan Fund. Funders receive regular impact reports and can designate funding amounts for specific programs.

### **Does CHSA work with other non-profits on housing projects?**

Yes! CHSA has partnered with many non-profits on affordable housing such as Mercy Housing Southeast, Chatham County / Savannah Land Bank Authority, the Coastal Empire Habitat for Humanity, Family Promise of the Coastal Empire, Neighborhood Improvement Association, and Chatham Savannah Authority for the Homeless.

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## **WHY NOW?**

**Chatham County Has the Largest Housing  
Unit Deficit in our Region!**

## Regional Housing Demand

PROJECTED COMMUNITY HOUSING DEMAND	BRYAN	BULLOCH	CHATHAM*	SAVANNAH	EFFINGHAM
<b>8 Year Unit Deficit</b>	6,620	7,815	17,626	3,711	5,198
<b>Annual Unit Projection Targets</b>	828	977	2,203	464	650



In 2024, Bryan County, Bulloch County, Chatham County, Effingham County, and the City of Savannah commissioned the Georgia Tech Center for Economic Development Research to conduct a Coastal Housing Needs Assessment + Planning Services. As can be seen from the above chart, Chatham County has the largest gap over the next eight years, despite having the smallest projected population increase of two percent.

To see an executive summary of this 2025 Report, visit Savannah Economic Development Authority's [RISE Savannah website](#).

[Read the Housing Needs Assessment Summary](#)



*Our Office Moved!*



**6600 Abercorn Street  
Suite 100  
Savannah, GA 31405**

*Effective 3/13/2026*

## Meet Jasmine Rilington, New Home Owner An Advocate for Building Family Wealth



From left to right: Joann Rilington, Jasmine's mother; Adela Smith, CHSA; Jasmine Rilington, Patient Care Technician, St. Joseph's/Candler; Carol Schretter, VP, Senior Loan Officer, Bank South; Vanessa Roseman, Switchboard Operations Manager and Chair St. Joseph's/Candler Employer Assisted Home Purchase Program; and Jennifer Woelber, Director of Human Resources and Member of the St. Joseph's/Candler Employer Assisted Home Purchase Program committee.

Jasmine Rilington works at St. Joseph's/Candler Health System as a Patient Care Technician in the surgery department. Among the many benefits of her employment is a down payment assistance benefit, funded through the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund.

"As a little girl I always dreamed of having my own space for independence and the security for my family for the future. And without CHSA, I don't think that would have been possible," says Ms. Rilington.

First-time home buyers like Ms. Rilington have access to down payment assistance programs from a number of sources:

**Georgia Dream Loan (DCA):** Offers 30-year fixed-rate mortgages and down payment assistance (DPA) to qualified buyers.

**Down Payment Assistance (DPA) Amounts:**

**Standard:** Up to \$7,500

**PEN (Protectors, Educators, Nurses, and Active Military):** Up to \$10,000

**CHOICE:** Up to \$12,500 for homes in specific areas or with specific features.

DreamMaker Program (Savannah): Provides up to \$50,000 in deferred payment loans for eligible homes in Savannah.

Employer Assisted Home Purchase Programs through the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund.

Saint Joseph's/Candler created this employee benefit in partnership with the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund in 2014. Each year, St. Joseph's/Candler has invested in the SAHF to help eligible employees purchase a home.

Eligible homebuyers may access FHLB down payment assistance through a [participating FHLB member bank](#).

Jasmine says, "I recommend these programs to future home buyers. A lot of people think it's not possible, especially in this economy, but it is possible, especially affordably, for you and your family."

[Explore Down Payment Programs](#)

[Explore Employer-assisted Housing Programs](#)

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## What is an IRA QCD? Donate AND Lower Your Taxes!



Are you frustrated with your tax bill this spring? CHSA has an important tax strategy for retirees!

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from an IRA is a tax-efficient way for individuals aged 70½ or older to transfer up to \$111,000 (in 2026) directly to charity. It satisfies Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) without increasing taxable income or triggering higher tax brackets, unlike taxable withdrawals.

**Example:** A retired couple over 70½ years of age must take an RMD, which could increase their taxable income. Instead, they can direct their IRA custodian to transfer up to \$111,000, per person, to CHSA (EIN 58-1850981). Because QCDs don't increase taxable income, both higher tax rates and phaseouts can be avoided.

### Key Details to Remember:

**Direct Transfer:** The funds must go directly from the IRA custodian to the qualified charity, not through the account owner.

**Tax Benefits:** The QCD is excluded from gross income, which can lower adjusted gross income (AGI) and reduce taxes, including Social Security taxation and Medicare premiums.

**Eligible Accounts:** Traditional, Inherited, SEP, and SIMPLE IRAs (if inactive) are eligible; 401(k)s and 403(b)s generally are not.

[Download a Form for your Broker](#)

[Donate to CHSA!](#)

### Why Home Repair Programs Are Essential for Preventing Property Vacancy and Abandonment

January 22, 2026



### How Home Repair Prevents Vacant Properties

This excellent article from the Center for Community Property explains how home repair is a core strategy to stop properties from becoming vacant in the first place.

[Read the article!](#)

## 2026 Conference: AAACDFI in New Orleans, June 16-18

The African American Alliance of CDFI CEOs will host their annual meeting in New Orleans in June. (CHSA is a member of the AAACDFI.) Visit their Website to sign up for their newsletter so you will get the registration materials when released.

[Visit their website!](#)

## Save the Date



 **2026 ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE**

**June 16-18, 2026**

The Westin New Orleans  
100 Iberville St., New Orleans, LA 70130

## Help us share good news!

Please share our newsletter with friends and colleagues!  
Each month, we bring you updates on the projects and partners who  
contribute to affordable housing in Savannah!

[NEWSLETTER SIGNUP](#)

[DONATE to CHSA](#)



### Our Contact Information

\*{{Organization Name}}\*  
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EIN 58-1850981



**CHSA**

Community Housing  
Services Agency

**Financing Affordable Homes since 1989**