



Workforce Development & Housing Stability

Connecting Housing Supply to Employer Recruitment & Retention in Southwest Georgia



Why Workforce & Housing Are Linked

- Housing availability shapes who can work locally
- Rural labor markets depend on proximity
- Limited housing reduces applicant pools
- Workers commute from Albany → rural counties due to shortages
- Sets the stage for **regional housing-labor alignment**



Housing Pressures in Southwest Georgia

- Rents rising in Albany, Thomasville, Bainbridge, everywhere
- Shortage of quality rentals in Colquitt, Mitchell, Worth, everywhere
- Aging housing stock limits options for young workers
- 34% of Dougherty County renters are cost-burdened (ACS 2023)
- (Dougherty 34%, Thomas 29%, Colquitt 27%, Mitchell 26%, Decatur 25%)

Impact on Employer Recruitment

- Applicants decline offers due to lack of nearby housing
- Healthcare, ag-tech, logistics hardest hit
- Skilled workers choose Tallahassee or Columbus instead
- Housing availability becomes a competitive advantage
- Leads to **recruitment bottlenecks**

Impact on Employee Retention

- Long commutes increase burnout
- Workers relocate when housing becomes unaffordable
- Housing instability reduces productivity
- Turnover increases training costs

Economic Consequences for SW Georgia

- **Slower business expansion**
- **Harder to attract new employers**
- **Reduced tax base for schools & infrastructure**
- **Increased strain on social services**
- ***Population Change 2010–2023* (Dougherty –5.2%, Mitchell –7.1%, Colquitt –2.8%, Thomas +1.4%, Decatur +1.3%)**

Healthcare Workforce Challenges in SW Georgia

- Nursing shortages at Phoebe Putney, Archbold & other hospitals
- Rural hospitals struggle to recruit specialists
- Housing shortages deter traveling nurses & new graduates
- Healthcare = region's largest employer

Case Study: Albany Living & Learning Community

- Partnership: Phoebe Putney + Albany Technical College
- Provides affordable housing for healthcare students
- On-site learning, clinical rotations, job pathways
- Strengthens local healthcare talent pipeline
- Model for **employer–education collaboration**



Successes

Phoebe - Albany Tech Living & Learning Community



Collaborative Project Between Partners
Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital & Albany Technical College
Addressing the Areas Critical Nursing Shortage

Workforce Development Program Strategies

- Align training programs with local housing realities
- Provide relocation & rental assistance
- Partner with housing authorities
- Integrate housing counseling into workforce services
- Strengthens cross-sector collaboration

Employer Strategies to Support Housing Stability

- Employer-assisted housing (EAH)
- Down payment or rental support
- Transit subsidies
- Public–private partnerships



Policy & Community Solutions

- Zoning updates for duplexes & small multifamily
 - Incentives for rural workforce housing
 - Streamlined permitting
 - Regional planning linking jobs + housing
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Conclusion & Call to Action

- Workforce development and housing stability are inseparable
- Employers + governments + educators must collaborate
- Expanding housing supply strengthens the SW Georgia economy
- Stable housing = stable workforce



Southwest Georgia



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Southern Regional Technical College,
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