

EDUCATION



There is a phrase that states “Education is key”. It is well known to the point it has garnered the status as a cliché. Upon further review, it is clear that education is the key to attracting residents to a community to live; education is key in building and sustaining an advancing workforce; and education is key in ushering in future generations of well informed, respectful, and engaging residents.

Public schools throughout the entire County are managed and operated by the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS). As of 2020, the school system consists of 24 elementary schools, 7 K-8 schools, 8 middle schools, 11 high schools, and 5 charter schools. In 2018 the school district had 37,576 students enrolled with a 14:1 student to teacher ratio.

According to the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, the district’s overall performance is higher than 41% of other districts within the State. The district received a CCRPI (College and Career Ready Performance Index) score of 71.4, or C grading, from The Georgia School Grades Report from the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement for the 2018-2019 school year; the same grade it received in 2018 after boosting up from a D in 2017. This score is relatively close with the average CCRPI score for the State.

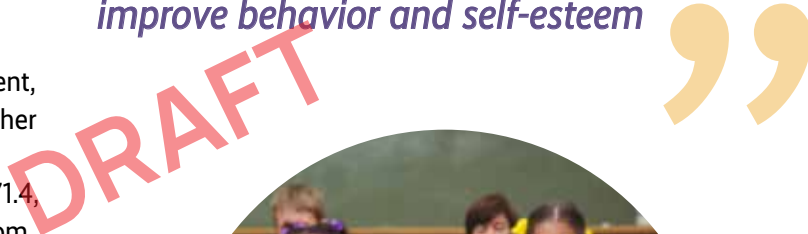


TITLE 1 SCHOOLS

Schools in which children from low-income families make up at least 40 percent of enrollment are eligible to use Title 1 funds to operate schoolwide programs that serve all children in the school in order to raise the achievement of the lowest-achieving students.

—Department of Education

Teaching mindfulness to grade school children is a new trend that has shown to improve behavior and self-esteem



60%

of Chatham County's public schools are Title 1 Schools

The report also noted that 40% of students who attend the SCCPSS are economically disadvantaged, meaning that they either live in a family unit receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits, or have been identified as homeless, unaccompanied youth, foster, or migrant.

Thirty-three (33) of the SCCPSS’s schools are defined as Title 1 Schools in which children from low-incomes families make up 40% of enrollment. Being economically disadvantaged can prove to be a large obstacle for students on the academic, mental, and social level and is an issue that both the County and City of Savannah should continue to work on improving.

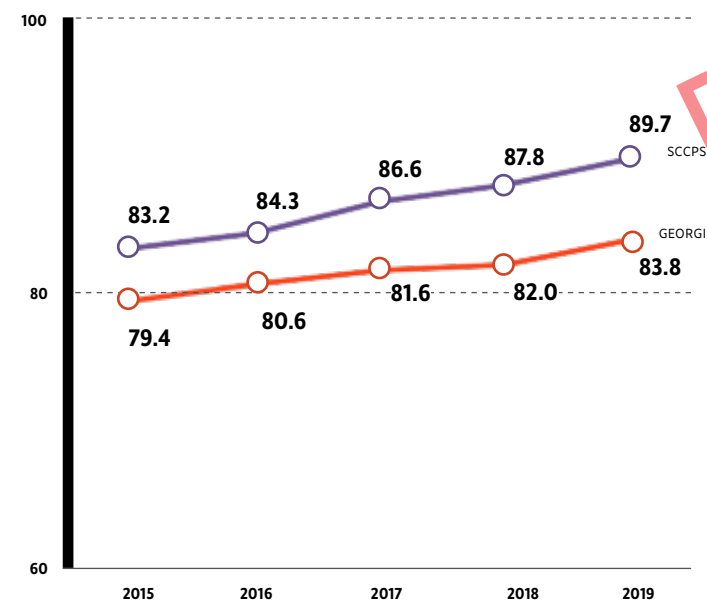


Figure 8.9–Graduation Rate Trend Chart 2015-2019

Census data shown in the table below reveals that the educational attainment for adults in Savannah has improved in the past decade with a 1% increase in adults having a bachelors degree and a 2.3% increase in adults possessing a graduate or professional degree. The entire State has seen an upward trend in adult education as well. The educational composition of adults in Savannah and the State is relatively similar, with the exception that the State does have a slightly larger proportion of college educated adults.



CCRPI

The College and Career Ready Performance Index is a comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform for all education stakeholders that helps to promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students.

—CCRPI

Educational Attainment 2019

	City of Savannah (%)	State of Georgia (%)
Less than 9th grade	3.2	4.6
9-12, No diploma	9.2	8.2
High school diploma or equivalent	26.8	27.7
Some college, no degree	25.9	20.3
Associates degree	6.7	7.8
Bachelor's degree	17.8	19.2
Graduate or professional degree	10.4	12.1

Figure 8.10–Educational Attainment for Population Over the Age 25



Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)

SCAD is a private, nonprofit institution founded in 1978 in the City of Savannah. Currently the school has numerous buildings and facilities located in different areas throughout the City serving its 15,000 students. SCAD has more than 40 majors and 75 minors, more than any other art and design university in the Country. Degrees offered are: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Master of Architecture, Master of Arts, Master of Fine Arts, and a Master of Urban Design. The most highly enrolled majors in Fall 2017 were animation, fashion, film and television, illustration and interior design.



SCAD

SCAD celebrates cinematic creativity from both award-winning professionals and emerging student filmmakers. Each year, more than 63,000 people attend the eight-day SCAD Savannah Film Festival. The festival is host to a wide variety of competition film screenings, special screenings, workshops, panels, and lectures.



Savannah State University (SSU)

Known as the State's oldest historically black college or university, Savannah State was founded in 1890. This public university is located in Savannah on a 201-acre campus, and offers 30 baccalaureate majors and degrees and 5 graduate degrees to its approximate 4,500 students. These majors are housed within four colleges: College of Business Administration, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, College of Science and Technology, and the College of Education. SSU also boasts a broad athletic program which is part of the SIAC, Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.



SSU

Every year Savannah State hosts its annual homecoming game and parade which is enjoyed by students, alumni, and residents alike.



Georgia Southern University (GSU)

This public university, once known as Armstrong State University, recently consolidated with Georgia Southern University based in Statesboro, to become the Armstrong Campus of Georgia Southern University. The campus is located in the southside of Savannah, is attended by nearly 6,500 students, and offers over 50 majors at undergrad and graduate levels. The University's Water's College of Health Professions is one of the school's premier programs, having long been the largest producer of undergraduate health professionals in Georgia.

Georgia Tech-Savannah

In 2003, the Georgia Institute of Technology opened its satellite branch in the City of Savannah. The campus offers courses tailored to furthering the education and skills of established professionals. Programs consist of the Georgia Film Academy, K-12 programs, Leadership Training, and Military programs. In addition to providing opportunities for career advancement and education for professionals, Georgia Tech-Savannah has numerous partnerships within the region providing assistance to budding tech-entrepreneurs and manufacturing and logistics guidance for large corporations to name a few.

South University

South University was founded in Savannah in 1899 originally as Draughan's Practical Business College. Throughout the years the school has transformed into a larger university developing satellite locations spanning across several states as well as offering online courses to over 3,500 students. South University offers 9 programs which awards degrees at the associate, undergraduate, and graduate levels in areas such as nursing, pharmacy, public health, and more.

Savannah Technical College

Founded in 1929, this Savannah based public community college serves 4,500 students and is a member of the Technical College System of Georgia and offers certificate, diploma, and associate degree programs in six academic divisions: Aviation Technology, Business and Professional Services, Economic Development, General Studies, Health Sciences, and Industrial Technology. The school has been ranked as the best university for military veterans for numerous years and continues to see a rise in enrollment throughout the five campuses.



Live Oak Public Libraries

Live Oak Public Libraries provides programs and services in Chatham, Effingham, and Liberty Counties through 16 library locations and community outreach. There are 12 libraries in Chatham County, with eight of those located in Savannah and one in Unincorporated Chatham County.

The Library's mission is to provide excellent, responsive service to enrich people's lives, support lifelong learning and build and enhance communities. Live Oak is creating tomorrow's library today to educate, inform, entertain and enrich the community. The Library is always open online at www.liveoakpl.org.

Live Oak Public Libraries is focused on increasing access, increasing community engagement and increasing organizational excellence and sustainability. The network believes that libraries are at the heart of every community, and strong libraries help create and sustain strong communities. Library services support early learning/literacy, educational success, economic opportunity and quality of life.

Live Oak Public Libraries is a member of PINES, the statewide network of public library systems serving Georgia. PINES (Public Information Network for Electronic Services), connects more than 300 public libraries in 54 partner library systems across 146 counties and gives library card holders access to more than 11 million books and materials plus online resources.

Benefits of the Library System

- Libraries are open to everyone
- Libraries support lifelong learning
- Libraries offer access to technology
- Libraries are community spaces
- Libraries are wherever you are
- Libraries are community partners



COVID-19 PANDEMIC EFFECTS

In calendar year 2020, with complications due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the library system saw reduced statistics compared to normal times but libraries still saw active use and patron engagement both in-person and online.

Libraries were closed briefly but then reopened to the public with safety measures in place to protect visitors and staff. Customers were able to browse and borrow items, use computers and internet, and enjoy virtual programs. The year 2020 saw an increase in the use of digital resources, such as e-books, and an increase in library card sign-ups.



Impacts of COVID-19 were seen in 2020 within the libraries' visitors and internet usage



Public Library Visits

Locations	2018	2019	2020
Bull Street Library	222,799	210,171	144,833
Carnegie Library	40,470	22,319	17,125
Forest City Library	17,486	16,654	10,521
Garden City Library	54,676	48,420	30,507
Islands Library	124,863	111,133	42,993
Oglethorpe Mall Library	134,877	110,791	74,207
Pooler Library	68,422	73,835	55,970
Port City Library	37,649	35,983	22,607
Southwest Chatham Library	183,372	133,178	93,165
Tybee Library	18,521	19,529	16,972
W.W. Law Library	52,143	42,666	23,729
West Broad Library	22,225	15,484	14,642
Total	977,503	840,163	547,271

Figure 8.11—Library Visit Trends

Public Library Wireless Internet Use

Locations	2018	2019	2020
Bull Street Library	14,166	85,440	78,884
Carnegie Library	3,557	14,300	13,077
Forest City Library	1,680	2,628	4,482
Garden City Library	5,833	12,940	10,963
Islands Library	7,742	23,380	5,521
Oglethorpe Mall Library	11,309	9,032	22,093
Pooler Library	4,979	14,312	9,281
Port City Library	2,352	2,832	8,767
Southwest Chatham Library	22,632	39,684	28,618
Tybee Library	1,376	956	2,708
W.W. Law Library	1	1,708	1,796
West Broad Library	249	336	2,448
Total	75,876	207,548	188,638

Figure 8.12—Wireless Internet Usage Trends



EDUCATION GOALS

GOAL 1

Encourage youth workforce and apprenticeships in high school

Objectives:

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GOAL 2

Ensure that financial skills, social skills, and conflict resolution skills are being offered to parents and taught to all students through the use of technology, community partnerships, and counseling for both parents and children

Objectives:

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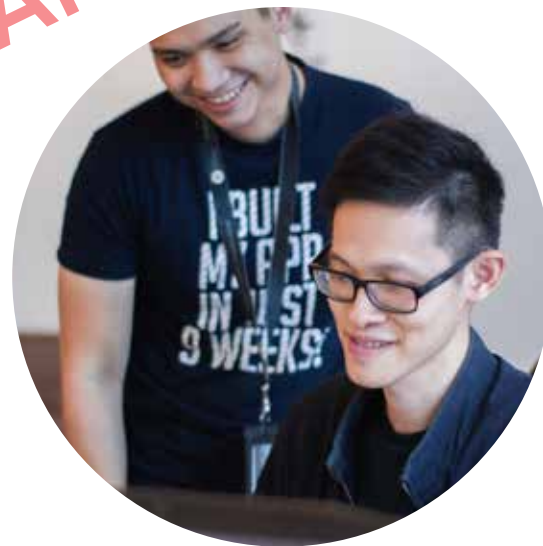


GOAL 3

Implement mentorship programs between employers and students; while increasing leadership development programs between community organizations and public schools to prepare students for employment and promote upward mobility

Objectives:

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GOAL 4

Incentivize and promote parental involvement in schools by teaching parents to advocate for their child(ren), facilitating better communication between parents and school leadership, and eliminating barriers to parent engagement

Objectives:

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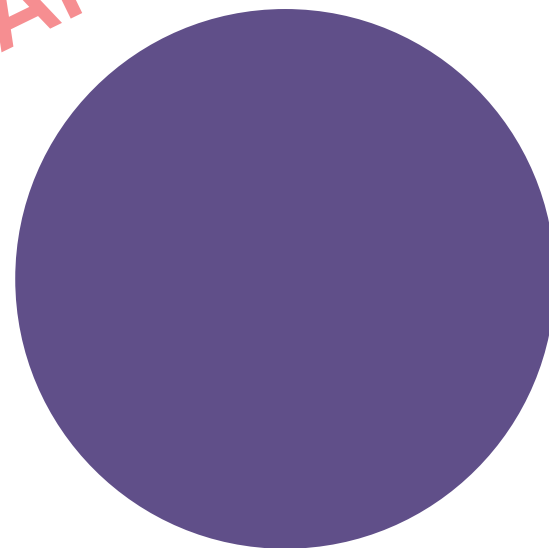
GOAL 5

Adequately fund public schools and Chatham County in order to prepare students for the workforce and/or higher education

Objectives:

- Create a dedicated funding source for education to assure future success of students in Chatham County without supplanting current funding to Current Expense and Capital Outlay
- In addition to providing buildings an adequate capital outlay budget for maintenance and repairs of existing structures must be funded
- With the rapid increase in the use of technology, adequate financial support must be adopted and maintained for future technological needs. This includes Current Expense money to provide supplies and technical support as well as Capital Outlay money to provide equipment to meet educational needs.

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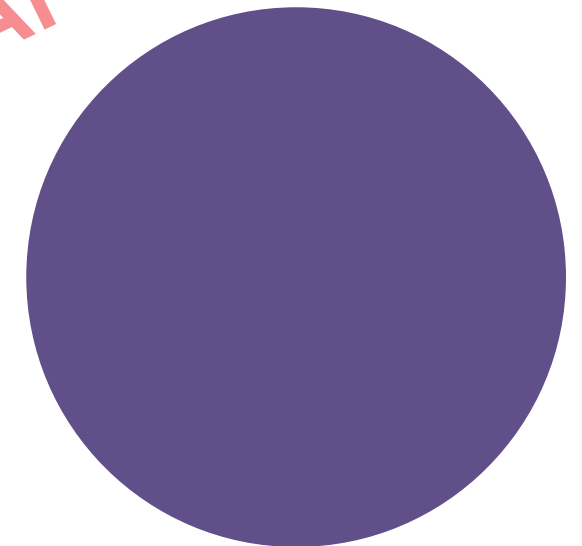
GOAL 6

Expand the school safety task force that will consider safety needs and develop a school safety program (School Resource Officers, security camera integration, etc.).

Objectives:

The safety of the students and staff of Chatham County's schools is critical to the education process. Unfortunately, school safety task forces are a requirement today and will remain a priority into the future. School Resource Officers are essential in providing security and promoting safety within our schools and community. In addition to our School Resource Officers, more security cameras, controlled access to facilities and improved communication systems need to be considered moving forward.

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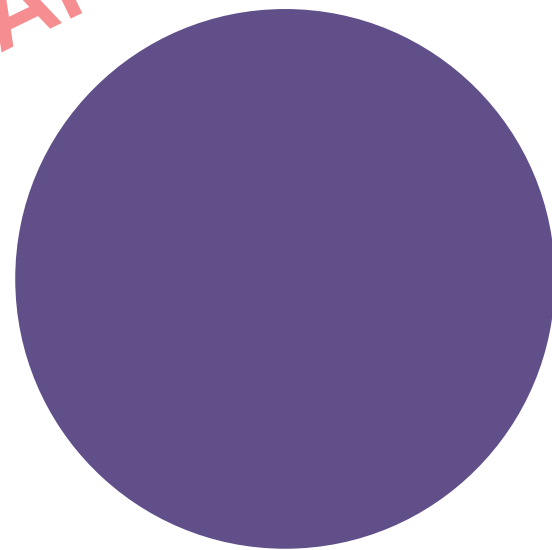
GOAL 7

Plan for changing populations, capacities, and overcrowding at Chatham County's Elementary Schools

As the population and demographics of our county change, we must make efforts to meet these challenges and insure that every student receives a quality education.

Objectives:

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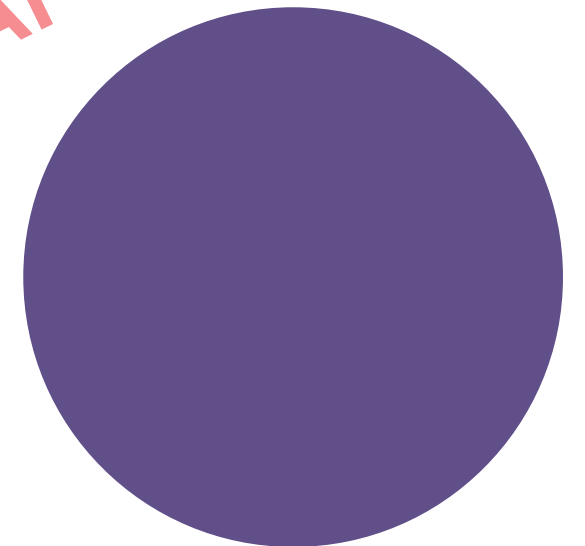


GOAL 8

Make every effort to allow the libraries of Chatham County to continue to grow and remain up-to-date with its resources and educational centers for the citizens of Chatham County

Objectives:

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COMMUNITY HEALTH



Health

Health is a term that is often associated with an individual and their lack of sickness or disease; the same thought concept can be carried over to a large grouping or area of people within their neighborhoods.

Community health is determined by the wellness of the residents of a particular area along with the aptitude of the environment to promote health and necessary resources. Most urban areas consist of a diverse population of residents which result in a stratified spectrum of community health. The following sections are all factors that make up or determine community health.

Obesity Rate

Obesity is the condition when an individual has excessive body fat which presents itself as a risk to their health. This condition has been shown to lead to more chronic ailments such as heart disease and stroke, the leading causes of death in Savannah and worldwide (Plan4healthus).

In 2018, an estimated 35% of adults in Savannah were obese in comparison to 32% within Chatham County overall, both figures that have grown substantially over the years—CGIC



The prevalence of obesity has continued to rise due to an increasing sedentary lifestyle, lack of nutritional health understanding, and oversaturation of fast-foods and processed foods which numerous studies have shown are related to numerous health issues including obesity.



HEALTHY SAVANNAH

In November of 2018, Healthy Savannah, and the YMCA of Coastal Georgia, was awarded a five year, \$3.4 million grant to undertake a REACH project from the CDC. REACH (Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health).

The primary goal of the Project HOPE grant is to reduce health disparities among African American and Hispanic/Latino Americans in low-income Chatham County neighborhoods.



Mental Wellness

Although a controversial topic, mental illness is a common reality many people live with. Mental illness can simply be defined as a wide range of conditions that affect mood, thinking, and behavior.

Numerous factors contribute to mental illness such as genetics, societal influences, and physical environment. A SAMHSA (Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration) survey conducted between 2009 and 2013 revealed that nearly 40% of adults in the State of Georgia were living with some form of mental illness. In response to this figure and other health related matters, Chatham County partnered with the Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition (CGIC) and developed strategic pathways to address community health issues, mental health being included, further ensuring that communities in Chatham County foster wellness.

It is a common occurrence for an individual suffering with a mental health condition to be confronted by law enforcement when their condition presents a challenge.

According to a SAMHSA survey, conducted between 2009 and 2013, nearly 40% of adults in the State of Georgia were living with some form of mental illness



Instead of mental health workers addressing the matter, law enforcement, many of whom are not properly trained for mental health situations, often intervene in these scenes. In events like this, it is common for law enforcement officers to arrest the individual and bring them to an emergency room. This creates a strain not only on the individual suffering through their mental health crisis, but also on the system of law enforcement and emergency medical service workers. The number of officers dispatched and number of ER rooms available to those in need are greatly impacted by the lack of structure and guidance regarding the process to assisting those in need of mental health services.



Food Access & Nutritional Education

Taking a ride through most urban areas, it is much easier to purchase a hamburger or fried chicken than it is to find fresh produce or a sugar free smoothie. The foods available to a community have a dire impact on its overall health. When an area is devoid of fresh and healthy foods it is considered a “food desert.” Contrarily, the term “food swamp” is used to describe areas that are over saturated with options of fast foods, processed foods, and junk foods. We live in the time where the majority of people reside in urban areas and do not grow their own food; this leads many to depend on external sources for their food. Given the county’s widespread development pattern, it becomes clear that there are not enough grocery stores and markets to accommodate each community. This is a strain particularly for the elderly and those with limited access to personal vehicles and public transit.

According to Federal Reserve Economic Data, 40,098 residents in Chatham County received SNAP benefits in 2018, a number that has notably dropped from previous years. Although this figure has decreased, it shows that a significant number of residents, nearly 14% of residents in Chatham County, still need assistance in providing foods for their households, 5% higher than the national average. In alignment with food access, food nutrition is just as important. If someone is gifted the option to choose between a monthly supply of sweets and potato chips or a monthly supply of dry beans, rice, and vegetables; their knowledge of food nutrition, or lack of, will usually be the driving force behind their decision. Having access to affordable healthy food is paramount; however, so is the ability to recognize the value in it is as well.

Nearly 14% of residents in Chatham County, still need assistance in providing foods for their households, 5% higher than the national average



FOOD DESERTS

Food deserts are low-income census tracts where a substantial number of residents have low access to a supermarket or large grocery store.

—The Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI)



FARM TRUCK 912

In an effort to increase the access to healthy and affordable foods, Farm Truck 912 is stationed at several different locations in the City every day of the week offering local and fresh produce for to the public most in need of healthy foods.



Blight

Blight occurs in a neighborhood when homes or empty lots are abandoned and begin to show signs of disrepair and neglect. This is not only a visual effect on the neighborhood, but often times an unspoken invitation for unlawful activities.

Blighted properties are known to bring down the property value in their neighborhoods, discourage the desire to invest, and decreases the perceived safety of the area. Neighborhoods that are well lit, have well-kept properties, and functional communal amenities such as parks, walking paths, and benches encourage physical activity and social connections amongst residents.



BLIGHTED HOUSING

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LAND BANK

The Chatham County/City of Savannah Land Bank Authority was created to acquire vacant, abandoned, tax delinquent properties in the City and the County to assist in the return of the properties to a productive use.



LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

In the Housing Element of Plan 2040, you can find more information about blighted homes that have been expounded and more.

Check it out on page XX!



Unemployment & Poverty

Unemployment does not merely mean ‘one without a job’. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployed citizens are individuals who are jobless and actively seeking work. Those who are not working and not seeking work are not considered to be in the labor force. When individuals struggle to find work, it puts a strain on a myriad of areas in life including finances, mental wellness, safety, and food security.

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the unemployment rate for the City of Savannah was on a gradual decline until 2020 when the pandemic occurred.

Unemployment Rates 2016–2020

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Chatham County	5.3	4.5	3.8	3.4	7.6
City of Savannah	5.9	5.1	4.2	3.8	9.1

Figure 8.11–County & City Unemployment Rates

Unemployment Stats for 2020

Year	Month	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Rate (%)
2020	January	67,768	65,192	2,576	3.3
	February	68,281	65,816	2,465	3.3
	March	68,920	66,038	2,882	4.4
	April	67,467	55,220	12,247	15.3
	May	68,106	58,599	9,507	10.8
	June	67,430	59,168	8,262	8.6
	July	67,003	59,442	7,561	8.5
	August	66,371	59,822	6,549	6.5
	September	66,291	60,176	6,115	6.7
	October	68,566	63,332	5,234	4.7
	November	69,181	64,111	5,070	5.6
	December	69,474	64,158	5,316	5.6

Figure 8.12–City of Savannah Unemployment Stats

COVID-19

As a nation, we were unaware of the dire impacts that COVID-19 would have on us all. As cases and fatalities continued to increase in 2020, many went into a state of paranoia and panic. Questions such as- “what exactly is this virus”, “how can I properly protect myself and family from it” and “how long will it last” came across the minds of virtually every person in this Country. As of April 2021, Chatham County has had more than 20,000 cases and 417 deaths due to COVID-19. In response to the pandemic, virtually every public and private space had to alter how human activity existed within their vicinities and the need for more accessible open and open outdoor spaces became evident. The virus has proven to be an incident that will have lasting effects moving well into the future.

Unemployment began to see an increase from COVID-19 starting in March of 2020 as it reached its peak at rate of 15.3% in April. It tapered down slowly until it reached a rate of 5.6 % by the end of 2020. Concerns with facing grave fears of death, eviction/foreclosure due to loss of income, drastic changes to household dynamics, and shortages of food, heightened the mental health challenges many were already suffering with and created a large splinter of anxiety for others.



Climate Change

As the nation continues to experience drastic changes in weather patterns, the affects have been severe on the general population in many areas. Excessive heat has increased the number of emergency room visits for strokes and dehydration.

There are studies that have revealed the correlation between excessive heat and violent crimes, even more so in low income areas (The Urban Crime and Heat Gradient in High and Low Poverty Areas | NBER). Extreme cold can decrease the amount of time spent outside which can in return lower levels of Vitamin D resulting in weaker immune systems and depression. Recent weather patterns have exposed severe cold temperatures to areas of the Country that normally do not experience hard freezes. These shifts left many states and local governments ill prepared in early spring of 2020 as the effects of the weather disengaged power sources and destroyed infrastructure. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the parallel between these changes in climate and weather, and public health threats with the need to assist and protect our most vulnerable populations and communities.

It is known that building wind and solar farms helps to reduce the human impact on climate change by displacing noxious emissions from coal-fired power plants. However, Harvard researched also shows that improved public health is an added benefit to the local implementing of Renewable development.

Renewable and energy efficiency measures help displace coal power plants and other fossil fuels, and helps reduce harmful emissions of nitrous oxide, sulphur dioxide, and carbon dioxide. A concentrated local effort must be taken to help reduce that impacts of noxious emissions and other pollutants on Chatham County's population.



COMMUNITY HEALTH GOALS

GOAL 1

Organize and promote community health services, recreational opportunities, and fitness programs to accommodate the special needs of families, the obese, the elderly, and disabled citizens to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors

Objectives:

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TIDE TO TOWN

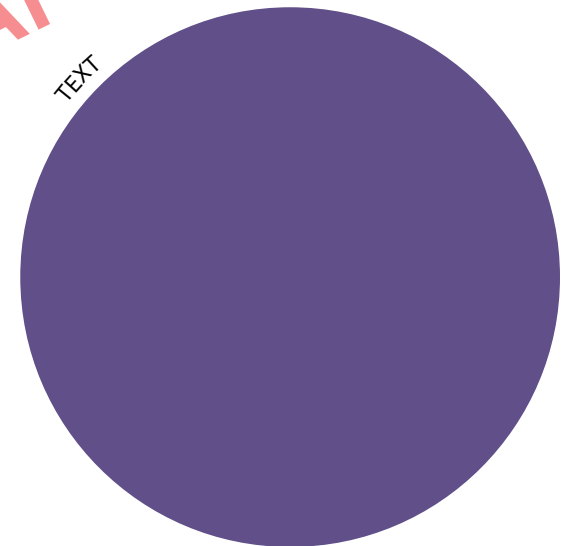
Tide to Town, a project to provide 30-plus miles of protected walking and bicycling trails, will connect all of Savannah from the heart of the city to its waterways and marshes, including 62 savannah neighborhoods, 30 public schools and all three major hospitals.

GOAL 2

Ensure access to and invest in community-based health resources for citizens to increase health equality while optimizing their health and wellness with preventive healthcare services, health education and strategies to motivate individuals and families to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors

Objectives:

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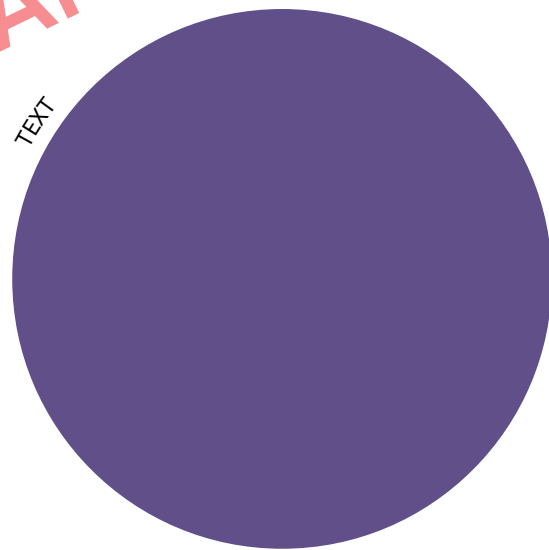
GOAL 3

Effectively address mental health by educating the public and reducing stigma, increasing early intervention programs, removing gaps and barriers, and increasing access to treatment particularly as it impacts incarcerated individuals, children, and adolescents

Objectives:

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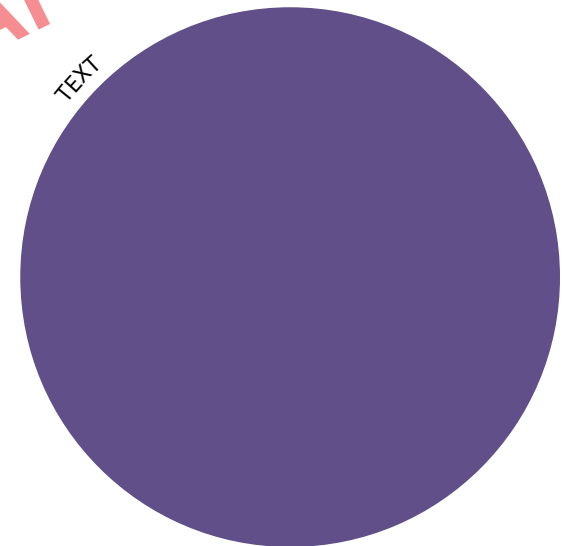
GOAL 4

Instill healthy practices in schools by providing comprehensive health education, nutrient-rich foods, opportunities for physical activity, and prevention education including, but not limited to violence prevention

Objectives:

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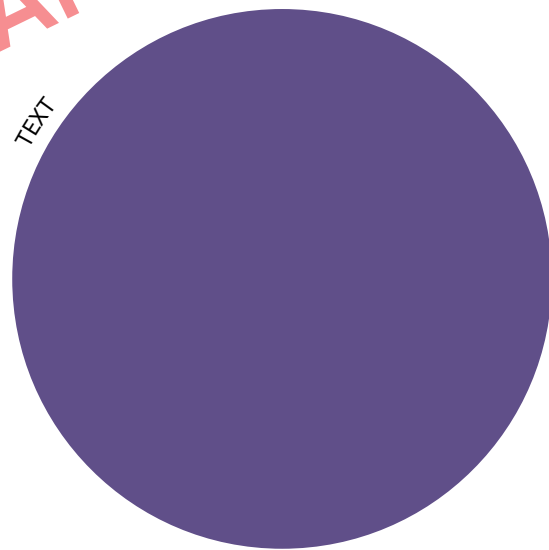
GOAL 5

Develop local and regional collaboration among similar organizations to improve the delivery of social services and to expand the continuum of services

Objectives:

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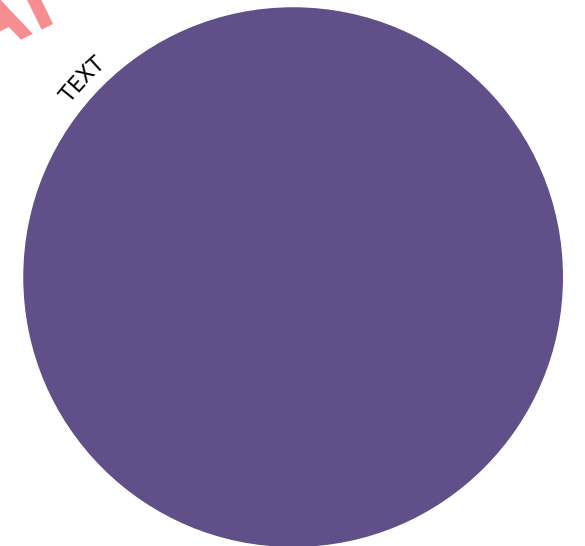
GOAL 6

Increase access to healthy food for populations most likely to experience food insecurity through community gardens and alternative distribution methods

Objectives:

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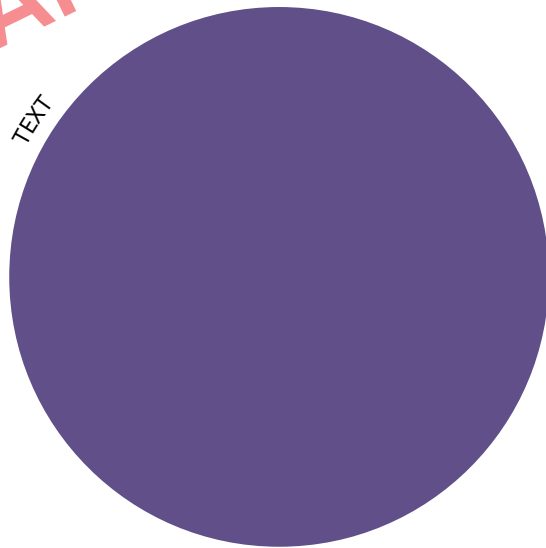
GOAL 7

Improve public health in Chatham County through the installation and promotion of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency measures

Objectives:

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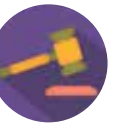
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PUBLIC SAFETY



Public Safety

When a critical issue or danger arises, we know not to call Ghostbusters or the little pups with paw-patrol, but 911. It is the responsibility of the local government to serve and protect the health safety, safety and welfare of its citizens and businesses. The safety of a community is fundamental to the wellbeing of its residents, economy, and longevity.

In today's world there are critical threats we must keep an eye out for: domestic and international terrorism, drastic shifts in weather patterns, rising sea levels, and more recently- pandemics such as COVID-19. In response to these, a successful government employs departments and passes ordinances in effort to sustain the safety and health of its community. Even in less intense moments of day-to-day life, it is the responsibility of the local government to aid in incidents such as criminal activity, car accidents, house fires, and downed power lines. Generally, for municipalities and local governments public safety includes fire protection, emergency management services, and law enforcement.

Emergency Management

Chatham County Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) services all of Chatham County and its municipalities and is responsible for the welfare of the County in the midst and aftermath of major disasters and emergencies.

The agency has developed a Disaster Recovery Plan, Emergency Operations Plan, and Hazard Mitigation Plan to proactively provide protection and courses of action in response to a number of different hazards/emergencies. In the Hazard Mitigation Plan, CEMA has listed severe weather, extreme heat, and flooding as the most likely hazards to impact the county.



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HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

Hazard mitigation planning reduces loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters. Mitigation plans are key to breaking the cycle of disaster damage and reconstruction

—FEMA

Fire

The City of Savannah Fire Department and Emergency Service provides fire protection and emergency response services to the businesses and residences within the city of Savannah's limits. The City's first fire company was founded in 1759 in the wake of a historic and devastating fire. Since then, the Department has continued to grow in size along with the City; recently receiving recognition as one of the nation's most efficient and effective departments. The department has received an ISO rating of 1 by the Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) and has been accredited by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI).

Only 2% of fire departments in the nation hold an ISO rank of 1 and accreditation from the CFAI. The department is divided into 5 divisions: Logistics, Investigations, Operations, Special Operations, and Emergency Preparedness. Throughout the City over 300 firefighters are stationed within 15 fire stations.

Areas of Unincorporated Chatham County are provided services by Chatham Emergency Services (CES), a community-based not for profit Fire, EMS, and Fire Watch Department.

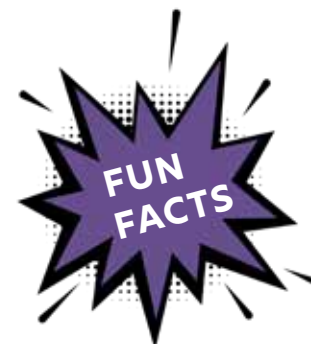
CES, formerly known as Southside Fire Department, was founded in 1961 by a collective of volunteer firefighters. Currently CES operates 14 stations throughout the County and has a staff of approximately 450 paid and volunteer workers.



3.57mins

Is the Average Response Time in minutes for the City of Savannah Fire Department

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SFD is one of the few, 2% of fire departments in the nation to be both accredited by the CFAI and a recipient of rating 1 from the ISO



Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement in the City of Savannah dates to the 1790s in the City's colonial period where a band of men served as guard and watch under the direction of a captain. The present-day police force was founded in 1854. The Department has continued to protect and serve the City of Savannah through notable and transformative time periods such as the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement. Savannah's Police Department is divided into 4 Precincts, consists of 8 investigative units, 16 specialized units, and employs over 540 officers.

Near the turn of the 20th century, as the City of Savannah continued to expand and grow, so did the areas on its outskirts. With a growing population and area, Chatham County established its Police Department in the year 1912.

After decades of often working with each other on numerous matters, the decision was made in 2003 to merge the Savannah Police Department and Chatham County Police Department. On the 1st of January 2005, the Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department officially became the law enforcement for the entire County and City of Savannah. In 2017, after much public input and thought, the decision was made to end the contract for the merger of the two police forces.

Currently, the Chatham County Police Department employs over 120 officers and consists of a Patrol Division, Criminal Investigations Division, Forensics Unit, Neighborhood Liaison Officers, Marine Patrol Unit, SWAT Team, and the Chatham Counter Narcotics Team.



END GUN VIOLENCE PROGRAM

The End Gun Violence Program is an initiative started by the previous Savannah-Chatham Police Department in an effort to decrease the high amount of gun violence in certain areas of the community. The program takes an approach to gun violence from a stance centered on public health and social services.



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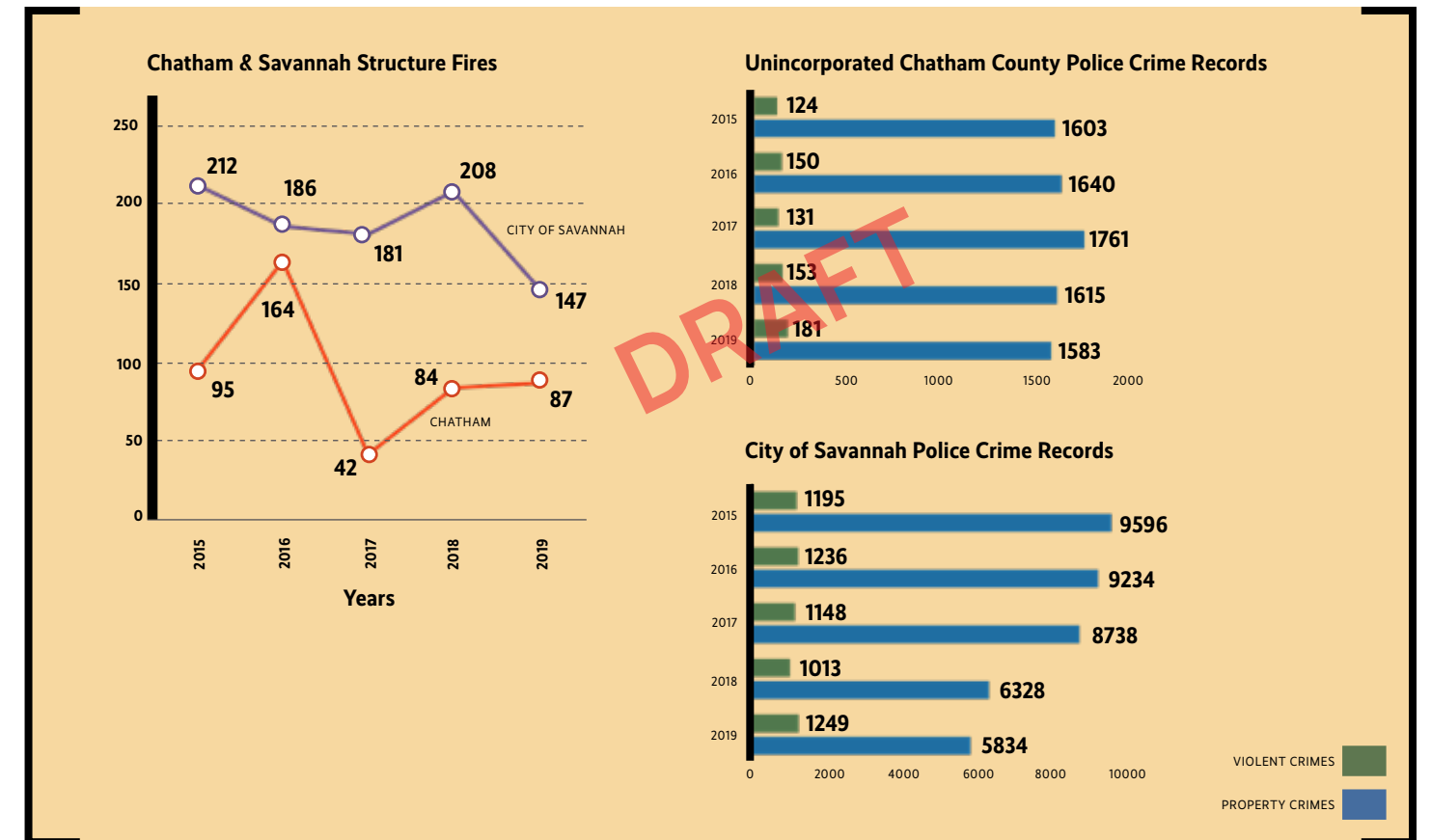
Fire & Police Stats and Trends

The number of emergency calls received by both the City of Savannah Fire Department and Chatham Emergency Services have remained relatively consistent within the past few years.

The majority of calls both departments receive are for medical emergencies. Unincorporated Chatham saw a spike in structure fires in 2018; however, the number dropped to nearly half the following year. In the realm of crime, the City of Savannah has witnessed a drastic decrease overall going from 10,791 reported total part 1 crimes in 2015 to 7,083 in 2019.

Violent crimes proved to remain constant, foretelling the need to address the root of violent crimes in the City. Unincorporated Chatham County's total reported crimes remained steady with a slight increase in violent crimes as well. Arrest records from the City of Savannah for adults and juveniles reflect the decrease in overall crimes reported within the 5-year time span. As the number of arrests decrease, data reveals that there is a significant number of repeat offenders who continue to get arrested for criminal activity. This information reveals two things: there is a need for an alternate solution to assist and redirect individuals from committing criminal behavior and fewer crimes are being committed by new offenders, especially amongst the juvenile population.

Fire & Police Stats and Trend Findings



PUBLIC SAFETY GOALS

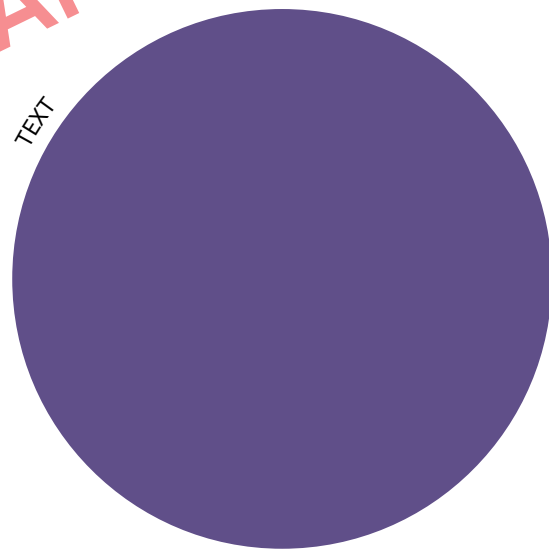
GOAL 1

Reduce crime, particularly abuse and violence, by building trust between law enforcement and residents, focusing enforcement in high crime areas, and expanding the visibility of police to ensure all residents feel safe

Objectives:

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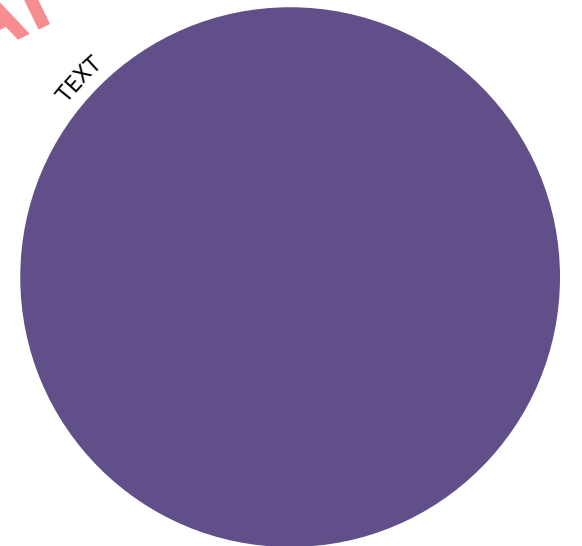
GOAL 2

Integrate environmental design elements which discourage criminal behaviors into the planning and construction of public space

Objectives:

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GOAL 3

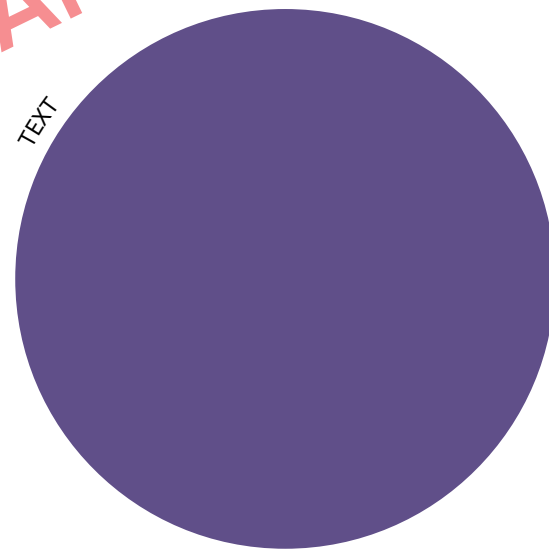
Provide efficient and premier emergency response service

Objectives:

- Collaborative efforts between departments
- Increase in tax or cost for services in certain areas
- Seek funding from state and federal level

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GOAL 4

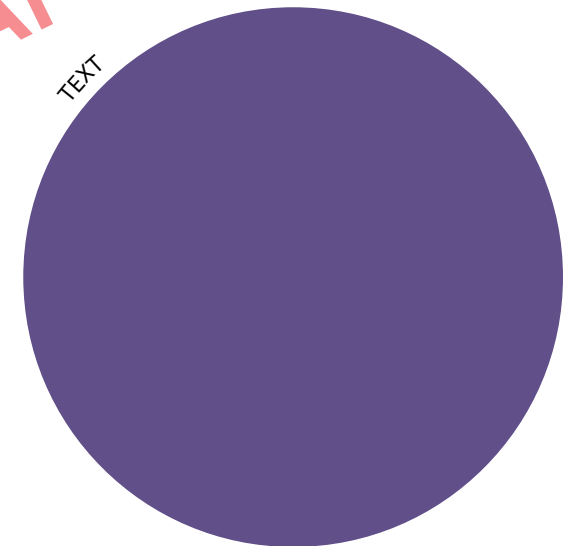
Reduce number of structure fires

Objectives:

- Identify and inventory older homes, create program that offers free assessment of potential hazards
- Produce more methods of fire prevention media...via social media, emails, pamphlets, school presentations
- Increase number of smoke alarms and fire extinguishers in homes
- Advocate for residential neighborhood fire teams and plan

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GOAL 5

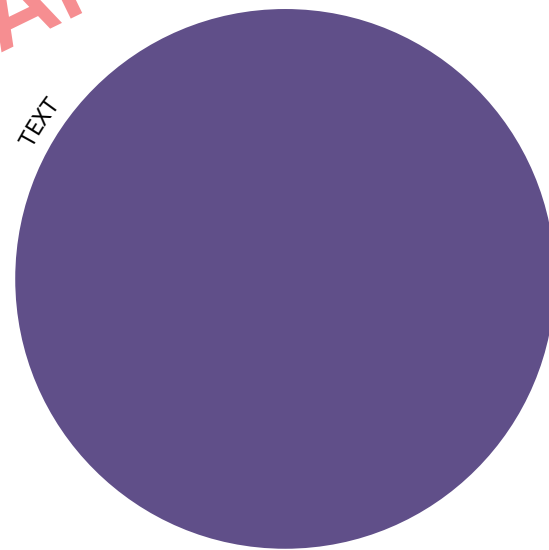
Emerge as national exemplary policing unit

Objectives:

- Ensure that hiring process selects highly qualified police officers
- Establish rapport and trust within community
- Offer other alternatives to incarceration

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