

Historical Need for the Housing Initiative in Millen/Jenkins County, Georgia

Millen and Jenkins County have a long history shaped by agriculture, rail transportation, rural development, and community resilience. Millen was first settled in 1835 and became an important transportation hub in 1854 when major rail lines connected in the area, helping the community grow around trade, farming, and movement between Augusta and Savannah. Jenkins County was later created in 1905, with Millen becoming the county seat. Today, the area remains largely rural, with an economy rooted in agriculture, agribusiness, and forestry.

Because of this rural history, housing needs in Millen and Jenkins County are tied to generations of economic change. Like many rural communities, the area has faced challenges connected to limited new housing development, aging homes, lower household incomes, and fewer housing choices for families, seniors, and workers. As industries and employment patterns have changed over time, many residents have continued to rely on older housing stock, while younger families, seniors, and low-to-moderate income households may face barriers to home repairs, affordable rentals, and homeownership opportunities.

The need for a housing initiative in Millen/Jenkins County is not just about building more housing; it is about preserving the community's foundation while preparing for future growth. Safe, stable, and affordable housing supports family stability, helps seniors remain in their homes, strengthens neighborhoods, and makes the area more attractive for workforce development and business investment. A strong housing strategy can also help protect the character of Millen and Jenkins County while addressing long-standing rural housing challenges that have developed over many years.

MARS Community Development Corporation recognizes that housing is central to community revitalization and economic opportunity. By supporting a housing initiative in Millen/Jenkins County, MARS CDC seeks to help connect residents, local leaders, public agencies, and community partners around practical solutions such as housing rehabilitation, resource coordination, affordable housing support, neighborhood improvement, and resident education. This initiative builds on the area's history while responding to current needs, with the goal of helping Millen and Jenkins County create stronger housing opportunities, healthier neighborhoods, and a more stable future for families throughout the community.