

GAINESVILLE NEIGHBORHOODS UNITED

The student factor: A major influence on housing and wages

Gainesville has one of the largest universities in the country, set within one of the smallest college towns in the country. The City's population is about 135,000, including about 72,000 students enrolled at the University of Florida and Santa Fe College.

Because of the disproportionate number of college students in Gainesville, the city's hourly wages are relatively low and housing costs are relatively high. Students often compete with the local labor market for service sector jobs, and student loans or generous parents allow some students to pay more rent than local residents. As a result, those at the lower end of the wage spectrum in our community pay more for housing, yet earn less per hour, than would be the case in a non-college-based economy.

In addition, because the University of Florida and Santa Fe College have more than 72,000 students in Gainesville, and most live off campus, every aspect of life in the center city is impacted by students' lifestyles. While many residents have chosen to live in Gainesville because they appreciate the vitality of our student population, conflicts are inevitable. These include students living in homes in family neighborhoods who, in some cases, choose not to respect the customs of the neighborhoods in which they live. In addition, students' daily and nightly schedules are not always aligned with those of working people, children, or the elderly. And the sheer number of students living off campus threatens to overwhelm adjacent neighborhoods.

More students = more pressure on neighborhoods

While many towns have affordable housing challenges, and many are college towns, Gainesville is nationally unique because our student population is disproportionately large and our town is, compared to national peers, disproportionately small. Our oldest neighborhoods, closest to the university and downtown, and often the most fragile, bear the brunt of this circumstance.

To learn more, visit our [resource](#) page, or suggest additional resources at neighbor@gainesvilleneighborhoodsunitd.org