



Westside  
Future Fund



# Transform Westside Summit

Convene | Communicate | Collaborate

Friday, May 16, 2025

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TRANSFORM WESTSIDE SUMMIT  
CONVENE | COMMUNICATE | COLLABORATE  
PRESENTED BY THE WESTSIDE FUTURE FUND  
FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 2025  
WIFI: TGS GUEST | PASSWORD: TGSVISITOR384

Agenda

7:45A-7:50A	Welcome	John Ahmann President & CEO Westside Future Fund  Ebony Ford English Avenue Resident & Community Advocate
7:50A-8:00A	Opening Devotion	Michele Ogden Internship Engagement Coordinator in the Office of Career Planning and Development Spelman College
8:00A-8:10A	Self Introductions	John Ahmann President & CEO Westside Future Fund
8:10A-8:35A	“The Group Project: Advancing Atlanta’s Neighborhoods Together”	Courtney English Chief Policy Officer and Senior Advisor to Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens
8:35A-8:55A	Q & A	All
8:55A-9:00A	Closing Remarks	John Ahmann President & CEO Westside Future Fund  Ebony Ford English Avenue Resident & Community Advocate

# Our Featured Participants

## **Michele Ogden**

*Internship Engagement Coordinator in the Office of Career Planning and Development Spelman College*

Michele Ogden is a creative soul with a deep love for growth—whether it’s helping students bloom into their dream careers or coaxing okra from the Georgia soil. Originally from Buffalo, NY, Michele’s journey has taken her through Brooklyn, Washington DC, Chicago, and now Atlanta, where she joined the Spelman College community in 2024. At Spelman, she channels her passion for mentorship into guiding students toward internships that align with their ambitions and values.

Before Atlanta, Michele owned a charming chocolate boutique in Buffalo, where she honed her craft as a chocolatier—an art that still sweetens her life today. Outside of work, she finds joy in quiet rituals: knitting, reading, and sewing a quilt that will keep her cozy come winter. She tends to her community garden plot on James P. Brawley Drive with care and hope—especially for a strong okra harvest—and dreams of one day buying a home through the Westside Future Fund to make the Westside of Atlanta her permanent home.

She shares life with her three spirited dogs—Foxye, Jagger-Valentine, and Pierre—and when the weather cools, you’ll find her biking the Beltline or practicing yoga. Michele’s story is one of reinvention, rootedness, and radiant care—for people, for community, and for every new chapter yet to come.

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## **Courtney English**

*Chief Policy Officer and Senior Advisor to Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens*

Courtney English believes in leaving things better than he found them. An Atlanta native, English was the youngest person to hold city-wide office in Atlanta’s history, first elected to the Atlanta Board of Education at age 24. In 2014 at age 28, he was elected unanimously by his colleagues to serve as that board’s chairman—the youngest in the history of the school system. During his tenure in the board, he raised teacher pay, increased classroom spending, increased the graduation rate from 51% to a record high of 79%, and sent more students off to college.

A former classroom teacher who understands that healthy communities were needed to support students and their families, he went on to work for a non-profit affordable housing developer where he helped create and refurbish thousands of affordable housing units throughout metro Atlanta, including the addition of wrap-around services to support those residents in the surrounding communities.

During the height of the 2020 Covid Housing Crisis, English served as director of community development for affordable housing nonprofit Star-C, raising \$11M to help more than 4,000 economically impacted Atlanta residents stave off eviction, while helping the city and surrounding communities expand access to affordable housing, reduce tenant transiency, and improve student education through innovative programs, partnerships, fundraising, and growth.

Today, English serves as Chief Policy Officer and Senior Advisor to Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens, where his policy portfolio includes some of Atlanta’s most pressing public challenges, including affordable housing, economic development, youth engagement, and closing Atlanta’s long-standing equity gaps.

English earned a Bachelor’s degree from Morehouse College with a focus on political science and his Master of Arts degree in organizational psychology and leadership from Columbia University. He has

# Our Featured Participants

served as a public speaker, sharing insights and perspectives on ambitious topics including global engagement, learning preparedness, neighborhood advocacy, public-private partnerships, and strategic policy development. He has been invited to participate in a variety of national conferences and educational forums, including Harvard University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Emory University.

English is a pioneer in building partnerships and creating solutions. Raised in Atlanta's West End, he readily credits his mom for his community-driven spirit. Her unconditional love and exemplary work ethic serve as guideposts in helping him develop others, young people, and emerging leaders alike. Courtney English is a devoted husband to his wife Kelly, who is better than he is at pretty much everything.

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## **John Ahmann**

***President & CEO, Westside Future Fund***

For more than 25 years, John Ahmann has been driven by the determination to improve the way communities and institutions function in Atlanta. From his early days working in Washington, D.C. to his positions with private, governmental, and organizational entities in the Atlanta area — including his eight years as an elected school board official in Decatur — he has focused his energy on solving the big problems whose resolutions can ultimately change Atlanta's trajectory and contribution to racial equity.

He has worked primarily behind the scenes, bringing together diverse stakeholders and managing initiatives to fruition. He has had a hand in some of the region's most important public policy initiatives and cross-sector collaborations. Along the way, John has built a vast network of individuals impacting Atlanta and its future.

A native son of Atlanta, John is currently the President & CEO of the Westside Future Fund (WFF). WFF was launched by the Atlanta Committee for Progress (ACP) in December 2014, with the strong leadership support of former Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed. The nonprofit organization's mission is to advance a compassionate approach to neighborhood revitalization that creates a diverse, mixed-income community, improves the quality of life for current and future residents, and elevates the Historic Westside's unique history and culture. Through its flagship program, *Home on the Westside*, WFF helps neighbors live in the place they love through access to high-quality housing and educational support, strengthening the city we call home.

John has been recognized for his work by receiving the following awards: 2020 and 2021 *Atlanta Magazine's* Atlanta's 500 Most Powerful Leaders; 2020 and 2021 *Atlanta Business Chronicle's* 100 Most Influential Atlantans; 2019 Michael R. Hollis Innovation Academy Partnership Award; 2019 Christian City's Community Champion Nonprofit Honoree Award; Atlanta Business League's Visions of Excellence Award in 2019; Antioch Urban Ministries Anchor Award in 2018; and 2018 *Atlanta Business Chronicle's* Best Overall Deal in Atlanta Real Estate Awards.

John has two adult daughters and lives in Atlanta's historic neighborhood of Vine City.

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## **Ebony Ford**

***English Avenue Resident, Community Leader, and Advocate***

Ebony Ford is a dedicated community leader and advocate on Atlanta's Westside, where she has lived for 15 years. As a resident of the English Avenue neighborhood and a proud parent of a student

# Our Featured Participants

at Hollis Innovation Academy, Ebony is deeply invested in the well-being and progress of her community.

Originally from Saginaw, Michigan, Ebony has made Atlanta her home and is committed to making the city the best it can be. She previously served as the Director of Community Building and Engagement at Quest CDC on the Westside of Atlanta, where she played a pivotal role in strengthening community ties and fostering engagement and hosted a podcast titled Westside Wise, leveraging her extensive network to connect the many entities doing impactful work on the Westside with the residents who benefit from these initiatives. The podcast also served as a vital resource for informing her community on important issues and developments.

Ebony is actively involved with several organizations, including the Westside Future Fund, YWCA, Atlanta Public Schools, and Westside Table.

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## VISION

A community Dr. King would be proud to call home.

## MISSION

To advance a compassionate approach to neighborhood revitalization that creates a diverse, mixed-income community, improves the quality of life for current and future residents and elevates the Historic Westside's unique history and culture.

## VALUES

### **Do with the Community, not to the Community**

We know that residents are the real experts on the challenges in their community. Therefore, we learn from residents and involve them in all we do.

### **Be Compassionate**

We meet residents where they are in a spirit of empathy and respect.

### **Have Integrity in Everything**

We stand behind all we say and do. We are open, honest, and courageous.

### **Be Creative**

We bring high energy and fresh ideas to tackling the long-standing challenges on the Westside. We're dedicated to trying different approaches to get different results.

### **Deliver Results**

We're committed to driving transformation in the long term, with a focus on measurable outcomes today.

 @westsidefuturefund

 @WFFAtlanta

 @westsidefuturefund

 westsidefuturefund.org





# Meet the Westside Future Fund.

## WHY THE WESTSIDE?

The Westside is an important part of Atlanta's past, present and future. These historic neighborhoods played a defining role in the American civil rights movement and is the place some of its most iconic leaders called home, like Ambassador Andrew Young, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Dorothy Bolden, founder of the National Domestic Worker's Union of America. The Westside also bears the scars of policies that led to depopulation and left those who stayed without economic opportunity. Today, the Westside Future Fund is working to change that and make it a model of racial equity and economic justice. The result will be a better Atlanta where everyone on the Westside has access to the resources they need to thrive.



## OUR MISSION

**To advance a compassionate approach to neighborhood revitalization that creates a diverse, mixed-income community, improves the quality of life for current and future residents, and elevates the Historic Westside's unique history and culture.**





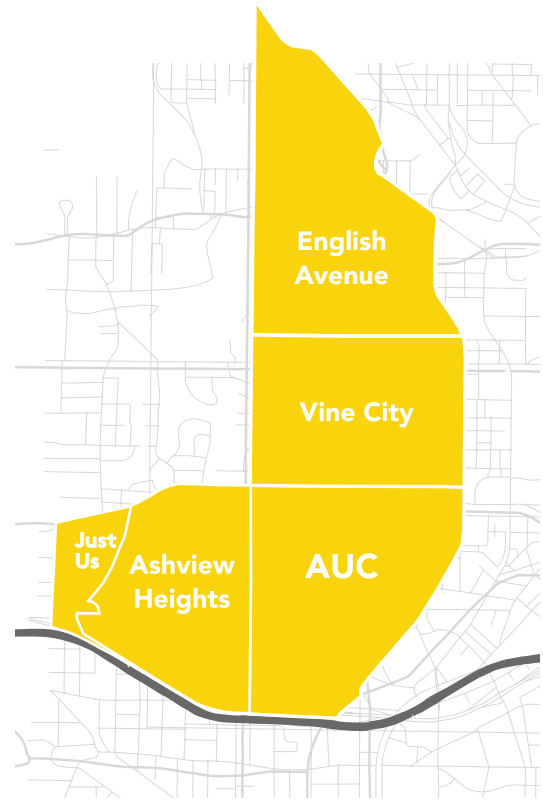
## THE HEART OF THE WESTSIDE

We focus on five neighborhoods in Atlanta's Historic Westside: Vine City, English Avenue, Ashview Heights, Atlanta University Center and Just Us. Long underserved and underfunded due to systemic racism, the Westside suffered from the lack of essential services, food deserts, neglected infrastructure and blight. Today, more than half of its residents live below the poverty line, and 40% of all housing is vacant. Only 79% of the population can read above the third-grade level. That is why our mission is to open access to resources and potential through the cornerstones of homeownership and education.

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**Definition of Legacy Resident:** Anyone residing on the Westside prior to 2017 as well as those with meaningful ties to the Westside including former colleges and universities, church congregants and others.

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## WHAT DOES THE WESTSIDE FUTURE FUND DO?

The Westside Future Fund is a nonprofit organization with a mission to improve the lives of current and future Westside residents. Through our flagship program, *Home on the Westside*, we help our neighbors live in the place they love through access to high-quality housing and educational support, strengthening the city we call home.



SAFETY  
& SECURITY



HEALTH  
& WELLNESS



MIXED-INCOME  
COMMUNITIES



CRADLE-TO-CAREER  
EDUCATION

### MORE WAYS TO BE AT HOME ON THE WESTSIDE

We ensure the availability of affordable, quality housing in ways that are financially attainable for long-time residents of the Westside or those connected to the neighborhood. That includes support to rent, buy or retain a home with a unique focus on community retention.

### ACCESS TO CRADLE-TO-CAREER EDUCATION

Education is a cornerstone of better futures and prosperity. Investment in these foundational opportunities starts with quality early childhood education and our partnership with Atlanta Public Schools in support of the elementary, middle and secondary schools that make up the Booker T. Washington Cluster. It continues through adult skill training and support of Westside entrepreneurs. Westside residents deserve the resources that support families and lead to quality employment opportunities.

### CHAMPIONING A SAFE & HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOOD

Collaborating with other organizations working on the Westside, we advocate for an environment where residents can thrive. That means teaming up to improve access to healthcare and overall wellbeing with greenspace, walkability, and safety. It's contributing to residents' sense of security by mitigating social factors that impact crime rates.

We also stand shoulder-to-shoulder with those who care about the Westside — residents, community groups, police officers, schools, business owners, developers, donors, and investors — and lend our voice to the calls for change today and a better future tomorrow.

We can stop the unchecked gentrification that displaces legacy residents of the Westside and tears the social fabric of Atlanta. Instead, we want to ensure they benefit from the rising tide of economic opportunity, rather than being swept away by it. Together, we can realize the vision of the courageous American civil rights leaders who called the Westside home: a thriving mixed-income community that models what it means to be a world-class city embracing racial and economic justice.







## CONTRIBUTE TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN ATLANTA

The long-term effects of underserved neighborhoods and generational poverty have limited opportunity on the Westside, and the enormity of the problem may seem overwhelming. Together we can break down barriers and build something better. We can connect legacy residents to resources that make homeownership possible. And, in turn, that homeownership can fuel transformational and generational change for them and their families.

**Home is more than a house, so when you contribute to *Home on the Westside*, you're also investing in the community.**

That means strengthening educational opportunity from cradle to career and advocating for the safety, security, and wellness of all our residents. It's a holistic approach to neighborhood revitalization.

Westside Future Fund's *Home on the Westside* program is uniquely built to realize this model. We represent a convergence of experience, expertise and influence from the worlds of business, education, government, and philanthropy, as well as the knowledge, connections and creativity needed to address the complex issues facing the Westside. **We also have the ability to leverage every \$1 donated to *Home on the Westside* with \$2 from the WFF Impact Fund, multiplying the impact of every contribution.**

**Revitalizing the Westside is not just something we can do; it is something we must do. Atlanta cannot forget those who built it. Get involved. Invest in real change. Make a better Atlanta at *Home on the Westside*.**





# THE WESTSIDE: Your home now... and for years to come



Introducing **Home on the Westside**, an initiative from Westside Future Fund to help drive inclusive community retention for Atlanta's Historic Westside neighborhoods.

We're taking steps to deliver safe, quality housing on the Westside with:

- Affordable 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom rentals
- Newly constructed and renovated homes for purchase and lease-to-purchase
- Down payment assistance
- Anti-Displacement Tax Fund for legacy homeowners
- Financial coaching and counseling in partnership with Operation HOPE's HOPE Inside program

## Are you interested in Home on the Westside?

Go online and complete a simple form to let us know which of our housing opportunities interest you:

[westsidefuturefund.org/homeonthewestside](https://westsidefuturefund.org/homeonthewestside)

Contact WFF with any questions.

Call: 470.377.1696

Email: [home@westsidefuturefund.org](mailto:home@westsidefuturefund.org)



**Westside  
Future Fund**

Legacy Westside residents, Ebony  
and her son, Jeremiah



Committed Volunteer Leaders: WFF Board of Directors



**T. Dallas Smith**  
**Board Chair**  
Founder & CEO  
T. Dallas Smith & Company



**Sylvia Russell**  
**Board Co Vice-Chair**  
Retired President,  
AT&T Georgia



**Peter Muñiz**  
**Board Co Vice-Chair**  
Vice President and Deputy  
General Counsel,  
The Home Depot



**Rev. Kenneth Alexander**  
Pastor, Antioch  
Baptist Church North



**Stacy Apter**  
Vice President  
and Treasurer  
The Coca-Cola Company



**Colline Hernandez**  
**Ayala**  
Principal,  
Perkins&Will



**Tom Boney**  
Retired Senior Vice President  
and President, Novels North  
America at Novellis



**Rodney Bullard**  
CEO  
The Same House



**Shawntel Hebert Clark**  
Managing Attorney, Employment  
Vanderlande



**Justin Clay**  
VP Commercial & External  
Affairs  
NCR



**Mick Cochran**  
Partner  
Kilpatrick Townsend



**Vicki Escarra**  
Executive Coach & Senior Advisor  
Boston Consulting Group



**Kathy Farrell**  
Executive Vice President  
Commercial Real Estate  
Line of Business Trust, Inc.



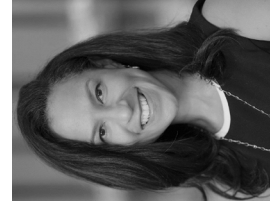
**Greer Gallagher**  
Senior Vice President,  
Holder Construction Company



**John Gamble**  
Chief Financial Officer,  
Equifax



**Virginia Hepner**  
Retired,  
CEO Woodruff Arts  
Center/Wachovia Bank



**Susan Johnson**  
Retired Chief Marketing Officer  
Prudential Financial



**Hilliary Jones**  
Senior Vice President – Banking  
Group Manager, PNC



**Kevin Holt**  
CFO & COO,  
H&H Hospitality



**Lea Kuschel**  
Partner,  
PricewaterhouseCoopers



**Harrison Lance**  
Senior Trade &  
Investment Officer  
United Kingdom Department for  
Business and Trade



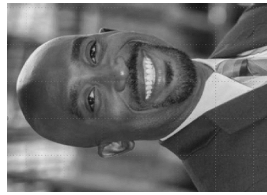
**Wonya Lucas**  
Former President & CEO  
Hallmark Media



**Bill Nordmark**  
President, & CEO  
Enlace Health



**AJ Robinson**  
President,  
Central Atlanta Progress



**Danny Shoy**  
Managing Director, Youth  
Development and Westside  
Atlanta  
The Arthur M. Blank Family  
Foundation



**Dave Stockert**  
Retired CEO,  
Post Properties

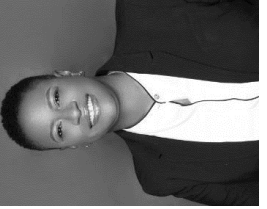


**Beverly Thomas**  
Retired Vice President of  
Communications and Public  
Affairs, Kaiser Permanente

Ex-officio Members



**Courtney English**  
Senior Advisor to Mayor  
Dickens, City of Atlanta



**Terri Lee**  
President & CEO,  
Atlanta Housing



**Dr. Eloisa Klementich**  
President & CEO,  
Invest Atlanta



**Kathy Waller**  
Executive Director,  
Atlanta Committee for  
Progress



**Major R.M. Woolfolk, IV**  
Atlanta Police Department  
Special Enforcement Section



# We're a Diverse, Talented Team



**John Ahmann**  
President + CEO



**Tameka Askew**  
Director of Home on the  
Westside



**Rachel Carey**  
Chief Real Estate Officer



**Sonia Dawson**  
Chief of Staff



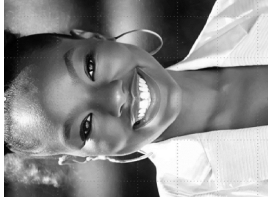
**Will Flanagan**  
Maintenance Supervisor



**Charles Forde**  
Director of Asset Management



**Lee Harrop**  
VP of Real Estate Development



**Mariel Hicks**  
Development Officer



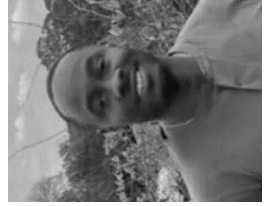
**Raquel Hudson**  
Director of  
Westside Volunteer Corps and  
Events



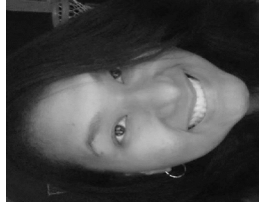
**Jon Ingram**  
Chief Development Officer



**Nicole Jones**  
Home on the Westside  
Program Coordinator



**Derrick Jordan**  
Real Estate Development  
Consultant



**Joanne  
Matayoshi**  
Accounting Manager



**Chelsie Moore**  
Senior Development Manager



**Keyana  
Newman**  
Senior Accountant



**Marni Pittman**  
Director of Finance + Risk  
Management



**Jackie Sawyer**  
Staff Accountant



**Robyn  
Washington**  
Volunteer Coordinator





Find out if you're eligible for  
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with the  
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w/Access from AT&T 768K to 100M plans only.

\*Terms, conditions & restr's apply.

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**100Mbps<sup>†</sup>**



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**No** installation fees, **No** equipment fees



**Over 99%** proven reliability

Based on network availability.



**Includes**—in-home Wi-Fi access



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everyone can enjoy their own screen

Number of devices depends on screen size/resolution.

## How to enroll:

### Step 1

Determine eligibility with the federal government's National Verifier at **[affordableconnectivity.gov](https://affordableconnectivity.gov)** or call the National Verifier at **877.384.2575**. AT&T does not determine ACP eligibility.

### Step 2

Once approved, call **855.220.5211** to sign up for service with your National Verifier application ID.

Visit **[att.com/access](https://att.com/access)** to learn more



Access from AT&T is available only in the AT&T 21-state wireline footprint. Geographic service restriction and terms apply. Not all speeds available in all areas.

<sup>†</sup>Internet speed claims represent maximum network service capabilities and based on wired connection to gateway. Actual customer speeds may vary based on number of factors and are not guaranteed. For more info, go to [www.att.com/speed101](https://www.att.com/speed101).

\*Access from AT&T is a low cost program for home internet service to eligible limited income households who participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for California residents. Eligible households who qualify and enroll in the Affordable Connectivity Program and Access from AT&T can receive internet at no charge with AT&T Internet Plans (768K-100M) and w/AT&T Fiber (100M only). A Wi-Fi gateway/modem and installation also included at no charge. AT&T reserves the right to remove the monthly discount at any time. If your monthly service charge is \$0 after the discount, you must use your service every 30 days, or the discount will be removed. **AT&T Internet:** Subj. to Internet Terms of Service at [att.com/internet-terms](https://att.com/internet-terms). **The Affordable Connectivity Program** is a federal government benefit program operated by the Federal Communications Commission that lowers the price of eligible service up to \$30/mo., or up to \$75/mo. on Tribal Lands. The benefit is not transferable to other consumers. Only eligible consumers may enroll in the program. Only one benefit is allowed per household and the benefit may only be applied to one service, regardless of service provider. If the program ends, you transfer your benefit to another service provider, or you are no longer eligible for the program, regular plan rates will apply. **AT&T reserves the right to remove the monthly discount at any time. If your monthly service charge is \$0 after the discount, you must use your service every 30 days, or the discount will be removed.** **Eligibility:** To establish eligibility, you must enter your eligibility information into the National Verifier at [www.ACPbenefit.org](https://www.ACPbenefit.org), then Call 1-855-220-5211 with your application ID and enroll in the ACP with AT&T for your eligible internet service to complete your enrollment. You must show, with documentation as needed, that your household income is at or below 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines for a household of that size; or that at least one member of the household participates in a qualifying federal assistance program (Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Supplemental Security Income, Federal Public Housing Assistance, The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), or Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit); or receives benefits under a certain Federal free and reduced price lunch program or school breakfast program, or is enrolled in a school or school district that participates in the Community Eligibility Provision ("CEP"); or received a Federal Pell Grant in the current award year; or, if on Tribal Lands, participates in certain Tribal-specific federal assistance programs. For more details, visit [www.att.com/access](https://www.att.com/access). ©2022 AT&T Intellectual Property. All Rights Reserved. AT&T, Globe logo, and all other marks contained herein are trademarks of AT&T Intellectual Property and/or AT&T affiliated companies. All other marks are the property of their respective owners.





# CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS EXTERIOR OWNER-OCCUPIED REHAB PROGRAM

Atlanta Housing, Invest Atlanta and the City of Atlanta have launched a deferred forgivable loan program that provides up to \$70,000 in federal funds to eligible Ashview Heights and Atlanta University Center homeowners for exterior health and safety repairs on their home. Funds will be provided in the form of a forgivable loan at a 0% interest rate with payments deferred and forgiven until the end of loan maturity, sale, transfer of ownership, or failure to maintain the property as the primary residence during the loan term.

**The maximum loan amount per home is \$70,000, inclusive of all construction related costs and closing costs. Loan term will be determined by loan amount, not to exceed 10 years.**

## **ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES**

- Homeowner must reside within the Choice Neighborhoods of Ashview Heights or Atlanta University Center.
- Must be a primary homeowner and existing resident as of September 30, 2015.
- Homeowners with 1st Mortgage Liens are permitted. Second mortgages from Habitat for Humanity on a Habitat home, and Invest Atlanta will be treated as one mortgage for purposes of this program. Homes with other liens (tax liens, recorded Fi Fas, etc. are ineligible. Homes with water liens must have a payment arrangement to be eligible).

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO APPLY**

Contact the Choice Neighborhoods Exterior Owner-Occupied Rehab Program Manager  
*Meals On Wheels Atlanta at [info@mowatl.org](mailto:info@mowatl.org) or 404-351-3889*



**Bringing Goodwill to the Southside:**

## **Store and Career Center on Metropolitan Parkway**

Located at 2160 Metropolitan Parkway, our store and career center will bring jobs and skills training to the local community. This project is generated 30-40 construction jobs for local residents and created an additional 50 jobs in the store, as well as in the career center.

Our focus will continue to be on not just helping our neighbors to find work, but helping them move into successful careers. All of our career centers provide free access to job search resources like computers, résumé writing tools, job listings, employment seminars, software training and more.

### **Great finds at great prices.**

Our new store is bringing great deals to your community. From clothing to accessories, housewares, and shoes; shopping at Goodwill will save you money and help your neighbors find jobs.



### **Job training for the future.**

Goodwill offers a number of skills training programs to prepare residents for careers in fields like technology, healthcare, construction, logistics and more.



**Donate. Shop. Support Job Seekers. *That's* #Goodwilling.**



### **Be the first to know.**

Visit [goodwillng.org/metro](https://goodwillng.org/metro) and sign up to receive updates on job opportunities, hiring events, construction updates and more at our new location.



# Attention families in need of heating or cooling assistance

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (**LIHEAP**) is a federally funded program that assists low-income households heat or cool their homes.

Apply for assistance at your local Community Action Agency. Take the following documents:

1. Proof of Income for all household members for the past 30 days
2. Proof of Social Security number for each person in the household
3. Most recent Gas and Electric Bill for the household
4. Proof of citizenship or legal immigrant status



**Heating Assistance  
Application Cycle**

• **November 1 - March 31**



**Cooling Assistance  
Application Cycle**

• **April 1 - June 30**

For additional information, email [LIHEAP-CSBG-LIHWAP@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:LIHEAP-CSBG-LIHWAP@dhs.ga.gov)  
Local Georgia Community Action Agencies can be found online at  
<http://www.georgiacaa.org>.





# Creating the Beloved Community



The end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the Beloved Community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opponents into friends. It is this type of understanding goodwill that will transform the deep gloom of the old age into the exuberant gladness of the new age. It is this love which will bring about miracles in the hearts of men.

Martin Luther King, Jr. from "Facing the Challenge of a New Age," 1956

The coining of the term, "beloved community" is credited to Josiah Royce (1855–1916), a Harvard professor, theologian, and philosopher, who taught at Harvard from the 1880s to 1910s.

Josiah Royce deemed the beloved community the "principle of all principles" and spoke of the beloved community as an ideal, separate from ordinary life, a spiritual community where all those "fully dedicated to the cause of loyalty, truth, and reality itself" were joined. Speaking from a distinctly Christian perspective, he stated that religious communities at their core should embody "the mystery of loving membership in a community." This participation was enacted through deep loyalty to a personal cause that one serves with "all [one's] might and soul and strength."

Royce wrote, "Find your own cause, your interesting, fascinating, personally engrossing cause; serve it with all [one's] might and soul and strength; but so choose your cause and so serve it, that thereby you show forth your loyalty to loyalty, so that because of your choice and service to your cause, there is a maximum of increase of loyalty among your fellow [human beings]."

Since you cannot find the universal and beloved community, create it.

Josiah Royce (1913)

One of Royce's students in the 1890s was W.E.B. Du Bois, who arrived in Atlanta in 1897 to establish a sociology program at Atlanta University and develop the university's curriculum. It is possible W.E.B. Du Bois and others could have discussed the idea of the "beloved community" and its embodiment in the Atlanta University Center and Vine City neighborhoods as early as Du Bois' arrival in Atlanta. Since the late 1860s, white and black educators, black students, and working class white and black residents had been living in the historic Westside.

Dr. King's mentor, Howard Thurman, was also a student of Royce and colleague of W.E.B. Du Bois. He used the term "beloved community" as an inspirational lens "to perceive [in the world] a harmony that transcends all diversities and in which diversity finds its richness and significance." He broadened the concept from Royce's specifically Christian orientation and emphasized the importance of truly integrated communities beyond legal integration and emphasized the importance of a radically nonexclusionary community.

During Thurman's lifetime, the historic Westside served as a nerve center of civil rights activism even as the effects of legal segregation remained in the community.

Community cannot for long feed on itself. It can only flourish with the coming of others from beyond, their unknown and undiscovered brothers and sisters.

Howard Thurman 1971

Dr. King takes the thinking of Royce and Thurman forward with his belief that we can "actualize the Beloved Community." Walter Fluker writes that the "beloved community" is Dr. King's "single, organizing principle of [his] life and thought."

Our goal is to create a beloved community, and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.

Martin Luther King, Jr., 1966





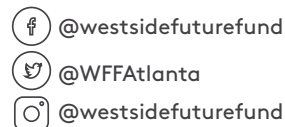
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