



METRO ATLANTA HOUSING STRATEGY

Housing Leadership Academy 2025 Cohort

2025 Housing Leadership Academy Members



Dr. Alieka Anderson-Henry
Commission Chair
Clayton County



Monique Sheffield
Commissioner
Cobb County



Whitney Kenner Jones
Commissioner
DeKalb County



Ann Tarpley
Mayor
City of Hampton



Kevin Lewis
Commissioner
Henry County



Michael Price
Commissioner
Henry County



Donya Sartor
Mayor
City of Jonesboro



Teresa Thomas-Smith
Mayor
City of Palmetto



JaNice Van Ness
Commission Chair
Rockdale County



Tuwanya Smith
Commissioner
Rockdale County



Vision

ONE **great** REGION

Mission

Foster thriving communities for all within the Atlanta region through collaborative, data-informed planning and investments.

Goals



Healthy, safe, livable communities in the Atlanta Metro area.



Strategic investments in people, infrastructure, mobility, and preserving natural resources.



Regional services delivered with **operational excellence** and **efficiency**.



Diverse stakeholders engage and take a regional approach to solve local issues.



A competitive economy that is inclusive, innovative, and resilient.

Values

Excellence – A commitment to doing our best and going above and beyond in every facet of our work allowing for innovative practices and actions to be created while ensuring our agency's and our colleague's success.

Integrity – In our conduct, communication, and collaboration with each other and the region's residents, we will act with consistency, honesty, transparency, fairness and accountability with-in and across each of our responsibilities and functions.

Equity – We represent a belief that there are some things which people should have, that there are basic needs that should be fulfilled, that burdens and rewards should not be spread too divergently across the community, and that policy should be directed with impartiality, fairness and justice towards these ends.

Who Makes the Housing Leadership Academy Happen? Atlanta Regional Commission Staff



Anna Roach
*Executive Director/CEO
Atlanta Regional
Commission*



Samyukth Shenbaga
*Community Development
Director
Atlanta Regional
Commission*



Ranata Mattison
*Principal Planner
Housing
Atlanta Regional
Commission*



Keri Stevens
*Program Manager
Community Development
Atlanta Regional
Commission*

2025 Housing Leadership Academy Partners



Daphne Bond-Godfrey
*Executive Director
Urban Land Institute*



Tim Block
*Senior Director of Programs
Enterprise Community Partners*



Sarah Stein
*CED Adviser
Affordable Housing
and Neighborhood Stabilization
Federal Reserve Bank
of Atlanta*



Ashani O'Mard
*President
Atlanta Neighborhood
Development Partnership*







Luben Raychev
*Community Design Lead
Georgia Conservancy*



About the Metro Atlanta Housing Strategy Toolkit

The Metro Atlanta Housing Strategy Toolkit provides detailed information and data about the region's housing market and offers a set of actionable steps that local communities can consider taking to address their housing issues. Housing submarkets in the ARC region are defined using home sales data for a point in time. Census data and demographic changes are incorporated to develop strategies and action steps for housing within each submarket. The tool is a guide to help the cities and counties in the ARC region understand and take the necessary steps to develop a stronger, healthier housing market that works for everyone.

Six housing strategies identified in the tool provide actionable steps and resources to address housing challenges through actionable solutions:

 <h3>Increase Supply</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify areas appropriate for higher density• Mandate and incentivize affordable housing development• Support smaller homes and ownership opportunities• Allow innovative housing types• Establish new or partner with existing housing entities	 <h3>Preserve Affordable Supply</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inventory affordable housing stock• Connect property owners with resources• Create preservation programs and partnerships• Leverage funding resources for preservation• Address blight
 <h3>Expand Capital Resources</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish local housing funding resources and programs• Identify regional funding mechanisms• Collaborate on new programs and partnerships	 <h3>Promote Housing Stability</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and educate on housing instability• Establish housing stability policies and programs• Connect to resources and establish partnerships• Reduce evictions and homelessness
 <h3>Develop Leadership & Collaboration on Affordability</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify housing needs through planning• Form committees and work groups for housing• Support local leaders through regional programs• Lead and partner for affordable and equitable housing	 <h3>Reduce Housing & Transportation Costs</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase walkability• Incentivize or mandate affordability near transit and jobs• Reduce costs of housing near transit and amenities

See <https://MetroATLHousing.org/strategies/> for more information.

What is the Housing Leadership Academy?

ARC created the Housing Leadership Academy (HLA), formerly known as the Local Leadership Housing Action Committee (LLHAC), to develop leadership and collaboration on affordability, one of the six strategies that are part of the Metro Atlanta Housing Strategy.

During the seven-month commitment, elected officials from cities and counties across the Atlanta region meet to share best practices, discuss barriers and challenges, and learn from industry experts.

At the end of the session, each committee member is expected to make specific commitments to effect change in their community.

Process

The HLA cohort includes a combination of in-person and virtual meetings, with the work occurring in three phases.

Phase 1: Development of Shared Problem Statement

Committee members identify current housing issues that need action to improve housing choices in their jurisdictions and the region, explicitly framing affordable housing from their perspectives as local elected leaders. The identified problem statement will be agreed upon to complete this phase of work, but can continue to be refined as needed throughout this process.

Phase 2: Shared Learning

Based on the identified shared problem statement, ARC will partner with organizations from various perspectives to develop and provide shared learning opportunities for the committee members. During this phase the committee will:

- Build an in-depth understanding of housing policies
- Learn about examples of local governments in the region and southeast who have addressed housing issues
- Interact with a diversity of housing experts

Phase 3: Consensus Building

Committee members will develop their individual actions/commitments to tackle housing in their jurisdiction based on learnings in Phase 2. These would be publicly shared.

We've identified several critical topics that require our immediate focus to drive meaningful change:

- 1. Aging in Place** - The need to provide housing options that will allow our long-term residents to remain in the community and meet their changing needs is critical.
- 2. Regulatory Barriers** - Zoning and building codes as well as permitting process are unable to support the need for housing production and preservation. Form-based codes is an excellent tool that has helped address density concerns while increasing housing choice.
- 3. Financial Strategies** - To build more affordable homes, there are several costs that need to be accounted for as well as several types of capital stacked together that include municipal, private, and philanthropic dollars.
- 4. Homelessness** - Each jurisdiction is facing a growing number of unhoused or working homeless population that needs to be better understood, and solutions identified.
- 5. Innovative Housing Options** - There have been a lot of innovations introduced into the housing market including modular homes, pocket communities, cottage courts, and container homes.

2025 Housing Leadership Academy Commitments

Commissioner Alieka Anderson-Henry - Clayton County

Affordable Housing & Workforce Housing

- Launch a Housing Day initiative to provide housing for teachers, first responders, and government employees.
- Deliver both rental and homeownership opportunities tied to workforce needs.

Affordable Housing Preservation

- Redevelop aging housing stock to stabilize affordability.

Aging in Place

- Increase senior housing options in walkable, amenity-rich areas.

Homelessness

- Integrate county strategies into regional coordinated homelessness response systems.

Innovative Housing Solutions

- Acquire strategically located properties for affordable housing development.
- Partner with housing experts to introduce diverse, ownership-focused housing types.
- Identify and engage developers experienced in GICH and public-private partnership projects.
- Deploy mixed-income and NOAH preservation strategies to prevent displacement.

Affordable Housing Finance

- Structure incentive packages to support mixed rental and ownership developments.
- Secure grants and partnerships for down payment assistance, land banking, and construction support.
- Create a gap reserve to assist income-qualified households.

Leadership Development

- Appoint board members to participate in ARC housing initiatives.

The Housing Leadership Academy has deepened my commitment to creating inclusive, sustainable communities where every resident has access to quality housing. It has provided valuable insight into best practices and innovative strategies for sustainable development, while connecting me with leaders who share the same passion for building stronger, more equitable neighborhoods across our region. This experience has equipped me with new tools and partnerships to help guide Clayton County's efforts toward building diverse, attainable, and thriving communities.

**Chairwoman Dr. Alieka Anderson-Henry
Clayton County**

Commissioner Monique Sheffield - Cobb County

Affordable Housing Finance

- Establish a Preservation Fund in partnership with banks and CDFIs to acquire NOAH properties.
- Layer public subsidies with private capital to finance mixed-income developments.

Innovative Housing Solutions

- Implement mixed-income public-private development models with partners.
- Advance transit-oriented developments that include micro-units and reduced parking requirements.

Regulatory & Zoning

- Adopt a public land disposition policy that prioritizes affordable housing outcomes.
- Create zoning incentives near transit, including density bonuses, height increases, and parking reductions.
- Example: TOD overlay district modeled after the Mableton Overlay.

Aging in Place

- Expand senior cottages, ADUs, and home modification programs.
- Partner with senior services and healthcare providers to support aging-in-place models.

Homelessness (Indirect)

- Preserve NOAH and mixed-income housing to prevent displacement and promote housing stability.

Participating in the Atlanta Regional Commission's Housing Leadership Academy has given me a deeper understanding of how housing challenges are being addressed across our region. The insight gained through this experience will be invaluable as I continue planning and implementing housing strategies that meet the needs of residents in Cobb County.

Commissioner Monique Sheffield
Cobb County

Commissioner Whitney Kenner Jones - Douglas County

Innovative Housing Solutions

- Partner with subject-matter experts to introduce innovative building materials, expand diverse housing types, and increase attainable homeownership options.
- Identify and engage developers specializing in varied housing types.
- Explore and leverage land trusts and land banks to support housing development.

Regulatory & Zoning

- Analyze and apply ARC housing data to identify housing gaps and inform zoning and land-use decisions.

Affordable Housing Finance

- Explore and implement incentive packages for developers.
- Invest county resources in developable land to lower costs and accelerate affordable housing production.

Having the opportunity to participate in the ARC's Housing Leadership Academy has reignited my belief that housing is a right, not a privilege, and I'm forever grateful to have participated in a program full of leaders who share this passion and belief. Participating in the program has made ideas that once seemed lofty and idealistic feel within reach and possible and I am excited to ensure that my community contributes to bringing abundant sources for attainable housing across every socioeconomic level within the Atlanta metro. I'm truly thankful for this program, network, and opportunity.

Commissioner Whitney Kenner Jones
Douglas County

Mayor Ann N. Tarpley - City of Hampton

Innovative Housing Solutions

- Acquire properties in high-opportunity, high-displacement-risk areas to support affordable housing development.
- Partner with housing experts to design, pilot, and deliver innovative and diverse housing types that expand homeownership options.
- Identify, vet, and engage developers with experience in GICH projects to form effective public-private partnerships.
- Preserve naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) and implement mixed-income strategies to stabilize residents and prevent displacement.

Affordable Housing Finance

- Create and deploy incentive packages for development partners that require a balanced mix of rental and homeownership units.
- Partner with agencies and pursue grants to expand down payment assistance, leverage land banks, and support builder give-back programs.
- Establish and manage a gap reserve fund to provide targeted financial assistance for income-qualified individuals.

Leadership Development

- Create and deploy incentive packages for development partners that require a balanced mix of rental and homeownership units.

The Housing Leadership Academy has provided us with the foundational information, resources, experience, collaboration, and tools needed to build a comprehensive strategy that reduces the challenges that the City of Hampton faces in housing. Affordable living standards are not options, but a right to all citizens and we are committed to making sure that it is a reality in the City of Hampton. Our focus remains on the protection from displacement or gentrification, safe streets, and communities, together with decent living conditions that are above standard. The Housing Leadership Academy provided us with innovative ideas to fund this strategy. The collection of expertise that this program brought together provide us with knowledge that many cities would never be able to access without this program. We are grateful for the experience, resources, and collaboration that helped us as a city transform our housing strategy.

**Mayor Ann N. Tarpley
City of Hampton**

Commissioners Kevin Lewis & Michael Price - Henry County

Aging in Place

- Support home retrofits, accessibility upgrades, and property tax relief programs.
- Encourage ADUs to support multigenerational households.

Homelessness

- Develop Permanent Supportive Housing using a Housing First approach.
- Partner with hospitals and nonprofits to deliver wraparound supportive services.

Regulatory & Zoning

- Remove regulatory barriers such as excessive parking requirements.
- Streamline approvals for affordable housing developments.
- Pilot a Community Care Housing Overlay with expedited review processes.

Affordable Housing Finance

- Establish and fund a Housing Trust Fund.

The Housing Leadership Academy has been an impactful experience. The content and presentations were relevant and the collaboration with my peers in the cohort has been invaluable. I look forward to utilizing the tools and resources in my Henry County community and also helping to move our region forward.

Commissioner Kevin Lewis
Henry County

The Housing Leadership Academy really opened my eyes to new and creative solutions for housing. Zoning Codes can either help or hurt the ability to be creative in developing housing stock.

Commissioner Micheal Price
Henry County

Mayor Donya Sartor - Jonesboro

Innovative Housing Solutions

- Authorize prefabricated, modular, cottage, and alternative ADU housing types.
- Incentivize developers to deliver cost-efficient and diverse housing options.

Leadership Development

- Expedite permitting and approvals for affordable housing projects.
- Waive or reduce development fees for qualifying affordable housing.
- Repurpose underutilized or vacant buildings for affordable housing.

Leadership Development

- Increase staff and elected official participation in ARC housing initiatives.
- Formalize intergovernmental engagement around regional housing strategies.

As a newly elected Mayor, Housing Leadership Academy provided me with the tools, resources, and connections to community conversation of housing in Jonesboro. It was also great to sit among other elected officials to learn about their progress and concerns. HLA is yet another way ARC is impacting our region in a powerful way!

Mayor Donya Sartor
City of Jonesboro

Mayor Teresa Thomas-Smith - City of Palmetto

Innovative Housing Solutions

- Develop eco-communities using regenerative design principles.
- Construct cottage homes (900–1200 sq ft) on 0.7–1-acre lots to expand attainable housing.
- Position Palmetto as a national model for biofiber-based, net-zero housing development.

Aging in Place

- Create senior-focused eco-villages that promote accessibility, reduce isolation, and support independent living.

Regulatory & Zoning

- Acquire strategic land aligned with updated zoning to enable regenerative and sustainable development.
- Incentivize innovative housing types by waiving fees and expediting permitting for affordable housing.
- Evaluate and pursue adaptive reuse opportunities for affordable housing.

Affordable Housing Preservation

- Pursue strategic opportunities to acquire land for housing.

My experience in the ARC Housing Leadership Academy has reminded me that when we gather like-hearted humans from every side of the story, we discover both the threads that connect us and the gaps created by our needs. I'm grateful to be in a space where we can shift the old mindset of 'protect what's mine' toward a more collaborative, neighbor-minded approach - one that seeks alignment when we can and commits to doing no harm when we can't. Sharing the power of biofiber as a pathway to truly sustainable, net-zero, healthy homes was a privilege, and I'm encouraged by how openly it was received by Ranata and my cohort. I believe we're at the start of something BIG! Thank you ARC for another great experience!

Mayor Teresa Thomas-Smith
City of Palmetto

Commissioners JaNice Van Ness & Tuwanya Smith - Rockdale County

Regulatory & Zoning

- Reform zoning codes to remove barriers housing development.
- Enable mixed-use developments across Districts 1–4.

Homelessness

- Implement a coordinated entry system in partnership with local providers.
- Establish a restart center to support individuals experiencing homelessness.

Affordable Housing & Preservation

- Redevelop aging housing stock to preserve long-term affordability.
- Increase the supply of affordable and attainable housing.

Aging in Place

- Develop senior housing with walkable access to services and amenities.

Governance

- Form a Housing Task Force to guide policy and implementation.

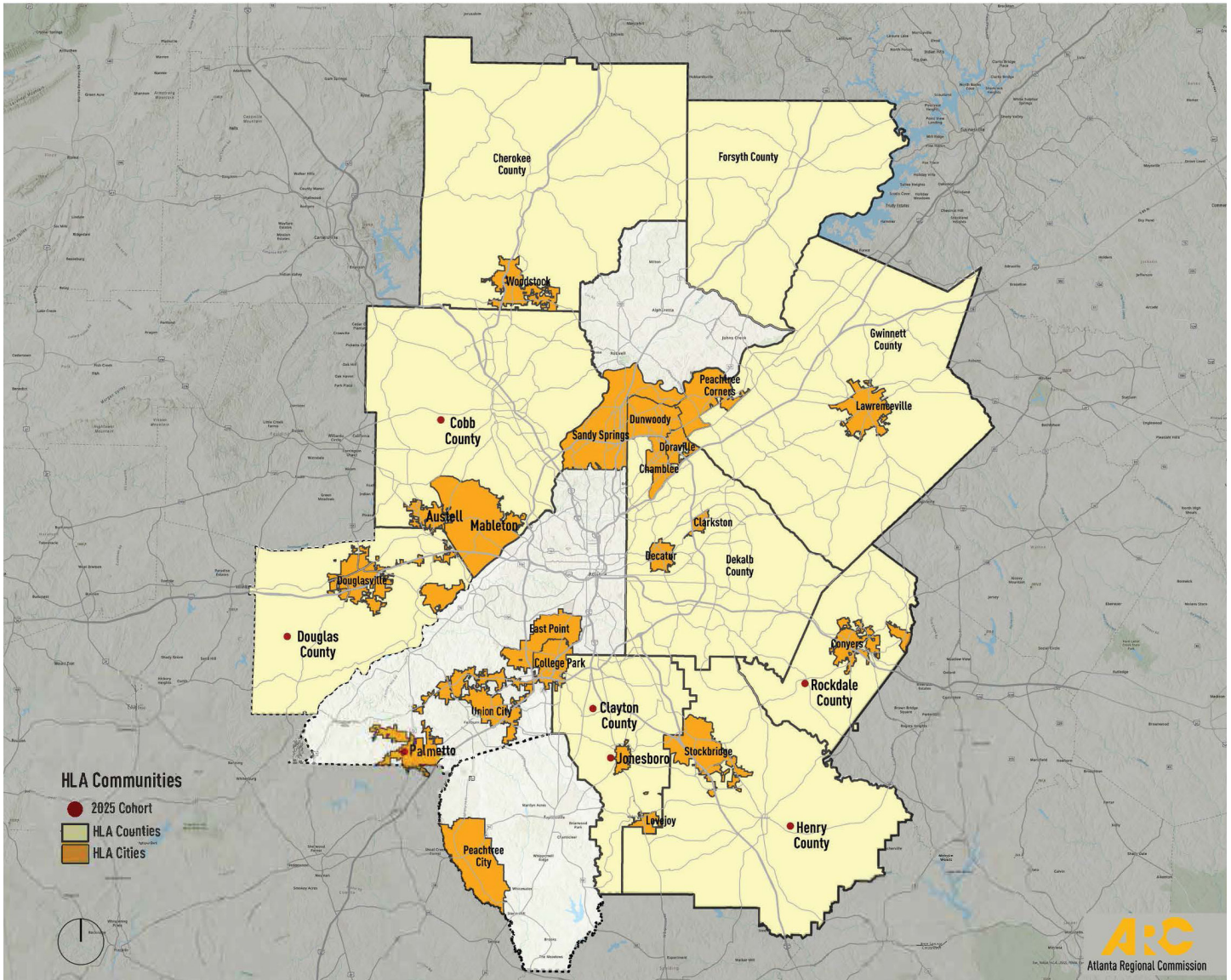
I enjoyed our time together and look forward to building our community in an even stronger way through the things that I learned in the Housing Leadership Academy. The interactions with my colleagues across Metro Atlanta were a great opportunity to learn how others are achieving success that will address the housing needs of their community. As I continue to work on finalizing our Land Bank, the class furthered my knowledge and connections with top talent that could be beneficial. Sincerest thanks.

Commissioner JaNice Van Ness,
Rockdale County

At the Housing Leadership Academy, I didn't just learn about solutions — I learned how leadership and compassion can transform housing into opportunity. It isn't just shelter; it's the foundation of strong families, strong neighborhoods, and strong futures. I am more informed, more empowered, and more committed to ensuring housing security for every resident I serve.

Commissioner Tuwanya Smith
Rockdale County

Housing Leadership Academy Communities Map



HLA 2025 Presenters

Matthew Elder, *Division Director, Gwinnett County
Department of Planning and Development*

Sharon Guest, *Principal, Radiant Development Partners*

Sarah Kirsch, *Managing Director Housing Funds,
Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta*

Atticus LeBlanc
CEO, PadSplit

Liz Treadwell
Low Oliver Coordinator/CEO, Low Oliver Inc

Will Johnston
CEO, MicroLife

Cathryn Vassel
Chief Executive Officer, Partners For Home

Melanie Keagan
CEO, Center for Family Resources

Amy King
CEO, Pallet

Christy Dodson
Associate Principal, Code-Studio

Allison Stewart Harris,
Associate Principal, TSW
Caleb Racicot, *Principal, TSW*

Housing Leadership Academy Communities Map

