



ATLANTA
NEIGHBORHOOD
REINVESTMENT
INITIATIVE

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Executive Director

Neighborhood Reinvestment Initiative Backbone Organization

Atlanta, Georgia

The Atlanta Neighborhood Reinvestment Initiative Backbone Organization is a shared effort by Mayor Dickens, City of Atlanta government and partners to make Atlanta the best place in the country to raise a child.

The Opportunity

Atlanta is a city shaped by legacy and lifted by possibility; a place where resilience, community, and aspiration have always forged the path forward. The city is experiencing a period of meaningful progress and renewed civic alignment. Leaders in government, philanthropy, business, and community organizations are advancing innovative approaches to strengthen neighborhood wellbeing and expand opportunities for children and families across the city. Yet even with this momentum, there is a shared recognition that economic mobility remains uneven, and that lasting change requires a more coordinated, holistic, and sustained effort – one that brings together the many assets, relationships, and community efforts already underway and helps them operate as a unified system.

Guided by Mayor Andre Dickens' "whole-of-government approach," the [Neighborhood Reinvestment Initiative \(NRI\)](#) is the City's commitment to making Atlanta the best place in the country to raise a child, grounded in balanced and fair growth, meaningful access, and increased opportunity. It reflects the belief that Atlanta is a group project, bringing residents, public agencies, philanthropy, nonprofits, and community organizations together to strengthen neighborhoods for all. Created to build on the progress already underway, the NRI represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to ensure that every neighborhood is a place where children can grow up healthy, supported, and positioned for longterm success. At its core, the NRI is about expanding economic mobility: ensuring that a child's zip code does not determine their trajectory, and that families have the stability, resources, and pathways needed to thrive.

A Call and Commitment to Act

"Make Atlanta the best place in the country to raise a child. That's not just a slogan. It's a commitment to balanced growth, access, and opportunity in every neighborhood."





“This leader must be relentlessly dissatisfied, always thinking about making things better with the North Star in mind.”

Rather than launching new programs or duplicating services, the initiative seeks to amplify what is working, strengthen partners on the ground, and align efforts across sectors so that community priorities guide decision making and investment. By coordinating the city’s most important levers – housing, education, workforce, health, and neighborhood infrastructure – the NRI aims to create the conditions where economic mobility is not the exception, but the expectation.

At the center of this work will be a new Backbone Organization designed to provide the leadership, stewardship, and connective tissue required to sustain a citywide strategy. This entity will help integrate strategies and initiatives to support housing, health, education, economic mobility, and other critical systems so neighborhoods can flourish through coordinated action. It will support Neighborhood Partner Organizations (NPOs) by providing technical, institutional, political, and financial capacity, and by helping the city, philanthropy, and community partners operate from a shared vision with shared measures of success.

The inaugural Executive Director will be a change agent for this rare and meaningful opportunity: to build a new civic organization that works in true partnership with community while connecting, amplifying, and accelerating efforts across the city. They will drive measurable impact that leads to real gains in economic mobility for Atlanta’s children, families, and neighborhoods. Just as importantly, they will strengthen the broader ecosystem of social impact and mobility, creating the conditions for the NPOs to do their best work and for the system to grow stronger over time. They will work alongside committed public and philanthropic partners who are fully invested in the work, and they will steward a mission that is designed to endure political transitions and remain grounded in resident voice.

This moment calls for a leader who is both visionary and practical; someone who understands the complexity of neighborhood systems, values the contributions of existing community organizations, and can help Atlanta move into its next chapter of coordinated, resilient, and community anchored progress.

The Ideal Candidate

The ideal Executive Director is a bold, seasoned, community-centered leader who can translate vision into disciplined execution. This leader combines strategic clarity with deep emotional intelligence, relationship sophistication with humility, and big-picture systems thinking with a willingness to roll up their sleeves. They are equally comfortable in the neighborhood and the boardroom, and they bring credibility with residents, philanthropic partners, civic leaders, and ecosystem organizations. Above all, they are energized by the belief that flourishing communities require coordinated and holistic investment in both people and place, and they have the leadership maturity to help Atlanta move from aspiration to aligned action. This leader is one who leads with legacy on their mind, not for themselves, but for Atlanta. They are:

A Visionary Strategist & Systems Thinker

- Sees the whole system, distills complexity, and drives toward shared priorities
- Demonstrated success leading large-scale, multi-stakeholder initiatives at a regional or national level with seasoned leadership in philanthropy, nonprofit management, community development, or public-private partnerships

The ideal Executive Director is a bold, seasoned, community-centered leader who can translate vision into disciplined execution.





The candidate we seek holds a deep commitment to racial and socioeconomic equity with strong grounding in community development or neighborhood transformation.

- Able to execute and position others to execute with discipline, navigate creative tension, and know when and how to pivot
- Able to build systems and culture while remaining relentlessly focused on results

A Trusted Convener & Relationship Builder

- Brings deep emotional intelligence and credibility; able to “own the room” through presence and confidence, not ego
- Authentic, charismatic, and relatable across diverse audiences: from philanthropic leaders and corporate CEOs to neighborhood partners and civic leaders, to community stakeholders and residents
- Demonstrates strong political acumen and builds trusted relationships across complex systems
- Communicates effectively across contexts and environments
- Communicates with transparency and authenticity, fostering trust by being clear, consistent, and grounded in community realities
- Works across differences to facilitate collaboration, build consensus and durable coalitions
- Operates with truth and integrity, with the ability to share hard truths with diplomacy

Community-Centered & Equity-Driven

- Holds a deep commitment to racial and socioeconomic equity with strong grounding in community development or neighborhood transformation

- Approaches the work in partnership with community and is highly attuned to community history, assets, trauma, and aspirations
- Able to listen deeply, receive criticism, and show up consistently without losing clarity or conviction
- Has proven expertise with economic mobility and its driving forces
- Understands the Atlanta community and its unique challenges and opportunities, or demonstrated success in a comparable context, with the capacity to quickly establish credibility and trust

A Builder Who Thrives in Ambiguity

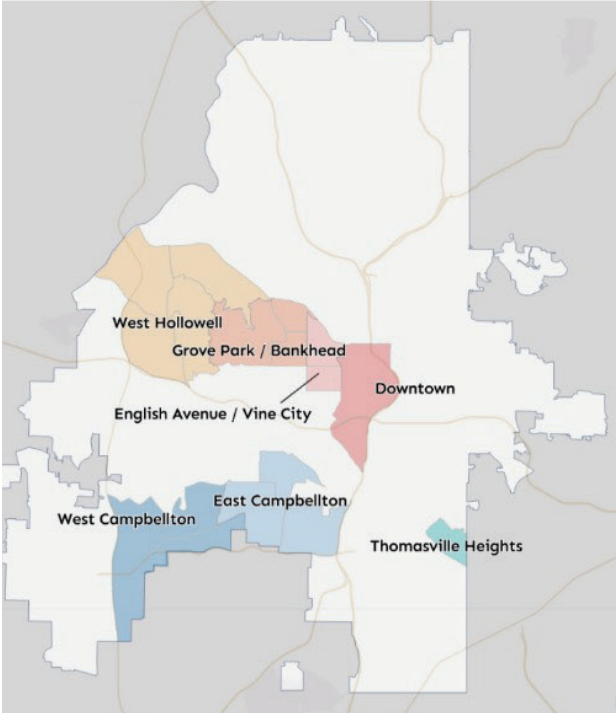
- Entrepreneurial, adaptable, resilient, and grounded
- Brings comfort with long-term ambiguity, thriving in startup and early-stage environments
- Adept at leading through change and creating clarity in evolving environments
- Capable of creating structures, building trust, and executing simultaneously in complex, cross-sector environments
- Experience in public sector operations, community development, or neighborhood transformation
- Able to cast and operationalize a vision, influence action, and engage credibly across multiple content domains

A Resource Mobilizer and Steward

- Proven ability to secure philanthropic support (ideally \$25M+), with a personal fundraising track record not reliant on an established institutional brand

The Executive Director will be able to cast and operationalize a vision, influence action, and engage credibly across multiple content domains.





“In order to create flourishing lives, we must create flourishing places.”

- Brings transferable national and local funder relationships
- Experience with capital deployment, or large-scale philanthropic campaigns, including grant management

The right leader will step into an initiative that has been carefully designed to support their success. Here is how the Backbone Organization is structured and what it has been built to do.

The Backbone Organization

The Executive Director will build the Backbone Organization from the ground up, shaping its mission, structure, culture, and identity to align with the vision and goals of the NRI. The organization will serve as the connective tissue for the Neighborhood Reinvestment Initiative, a coordinated, multi-sector effort focused on seven [neighborhood areas](#): *Thomasville Heights, English Avenue/Vine City, Grove Park/Bankhead, West Hollowell, East Campbellton, West Campbellton, and Downtown*. These neighborhood areas have:

- A history of disinvestment
- Existing plans, partnerships, and infrastructure
- Strong resident leadership and rich culture legacies and heritage
- An opportunity for long-term impact

The Backbone Organization will:

- Provide leadership and stewardship for a transformational citywide strategy
- Align public, philanthropic, and nonprofit resources to drive and elevate collective action and sustained impact

- Support shared data, accountability, storytelling, learning, and best practices
- Incubate and scale crosscutting and innovative initiatives that address public safety, housing, health, youth development, education, workforce, and economic mobility
- Convene and build capacity across Neighborhood Partner Organizations
- Ensure the work remains community centered, equity driven and enduring in excellence

Translating that structural mandate into day-to-day execution will require disciplined leadership across four core areas of responsibility.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Shape the organization’s mission, values, culture, governance, and operating model with a focus on ensuring every neighborhood has the resources needed to thrive
- Translate strategy into coordinated action and early wins
- Steward and evolve an existing investable plan with clear priorities, milestones, and measurable outcomes for advancing economic mobility
- Build systems that ensure transparency, accountability, collaboration, and learning
- Ensure alignment across governance structures, funders, NPOs, partners, and key stakeholders
- Craft, syndicate, and deliver key communications on behalf of the organization



The Backbone Organization will incubate and scale crosscutting and innovative initiatives that address public safety, housing, health, youth development, education, workforce, and economic mobility.

Articulating a compelling case for investment, centering NRI's Backbone Organization's value proposition in data, community voice, and demonstrate early wins will be a key responsibility of the Executive Director.



- Represent the NRI Backbone Organization as an active, visible, and credible leader across Atlanta's civic, philanthropic, and business communities
- Facilitate growth and progress that connects neighborhood-level work to drive larger policy and systems-change opportunities

Resource Mobilization & Financial Stewardship

- Develop and execute a fundraising strategy for the overall enterprise
- Responsible for cultivating implementation capital for the effort, with support from the advisory board, Blue Meridian Partners, and the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation (*The initial advisory board will be responsible for securing operating support for the organization in the bridge phase.*)
- Build new donor relationships while strengthening those of neighborhood partners
- Articulate a compelling case for investment, centering NRI's Backbone Organization's value proposition in data, community voice, and demonstrate early wins
- Strategically deploy resources toward neighborhood and system-wide priorities
- Cultivate relationships with national donors, corporate partners, and philanthropic institutions
- Ensure transparent, compliant financial management and reporting that builds confidence among all funders and stakeholders

Coalition & Movement Building, Stakeholder Engagement

- Serve as the organization's primary spokesperson and relationship anchor, building trust and credibility with a wide range of stakeholders
- Serve as a trusted convener across neighborhood, philanthropy, government, and corporate partners
- Engage Neighborhood Partner Organization leaders to understand vision, community needs, challenges, opportunities, and goals with a focus on maximizing collective impact, alignment, and commonalities
- Navigate complex community realities and demonstrate humility and respect, especially in historically disinvested neighborhoods, by building trust "at the speed of relationship."
- Steward key relationships with donors, civic leaders, and partners for long-term success
- Facilitate access to relevant expertise, including technical assistance and capacity building

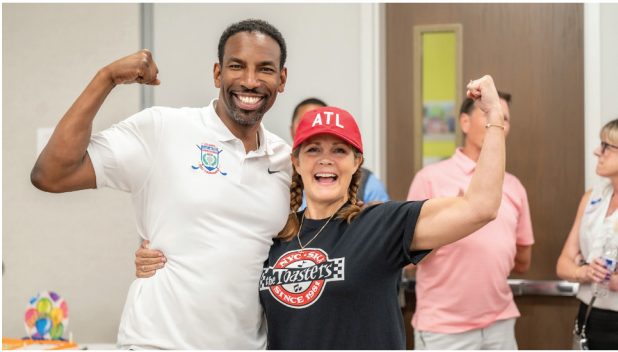
Organizational Leadership & Governance

- Build and lead a small, high-performing, mission-driven team with strong coaching and people-development practices
- Develop operational systems, data infrastructure, communications, and evaluation processes
- Maintain organizational discipline in a start-up environment: an operator, not a president
- Ensure the backbone functions as an enabler, not a competitor, to neighborhood organizations



The Atlanta Neighborhood Reinvestment Initiative focuses on the essential systems—or building blocks—that every neighborhood needs to support children, families, and futures.

City leaders, residents, partners, and organizations are all working toward the same goal: stronger neighborhoods for all Atlantans.



- Maintain momentum despite timeline shifts and complex stakeholder dynamics
- Ensure the work is durable across mayoral transitions
- Operate with a mindset of continuous improvement and a sense of urgency to address the needs and challenges of the neighborhoods
- Establish, convene, support, and manage the board of directors; serve as a key representative on the board

Looking beyond the immediate work, the Executive Director will be accountable for measurable progress that compounds over time, building an institution that endures well beyond any single leader or political cycle.

Looking Ahead

Over time, the Executive Director will help position Atlanta as a national leader in place-based community transformation. Success for the Executive Director includes establishing:

- A fully operational and trusted Backbone Organization built for long-term impact
- Strong community partnerships and resident-centered decision-making
- Demonstrable progress on pilot initiatives and key neighborhood priorities
- A clear, shared citywide Way of Working across partners
- A robust data infrastructure supporting decision-making, transparency, and storytelling
- Significant philanthropic capital secured and stewarded

- A durable, longterm strategy capable of delivering generational impact, regardless of political transition.

Success Year 1

After Year 1, the Executive Director has established a strong organizational foundation with clear systems, policies, and a unifying strategic direction. They have also built trust across neighborhoods and partners by engaging deeply with residents, NPOs, public agencies, and philanthropic stakeholders - inspiring a public movement.

Success Years 3-5

By Years 3-5, the Backbone functions as a coordinated civic engine with well-defined governance, strong alliances, and shared decision-making structures that keep partners aligned. A robust, widely used data infrastructure guides decisions, demonstrates progress, and strengthens the initiative's collective story of impact.

Success Year 10

Ten years in, the organization is recognized as a durable, relevant, and indispensable hub for Atlanta's neighborhood investment work. It is the place where partners consistently come to collaborate, problem-solve, and drive longterm neighborhood transformation.

The Relationships

The Executive Director will initially report to an advisory board led by the Executive Director of the [Atlanta Committee for Progress](#), then to the organizational board once established. The plan is to staff the organization with a lean, high-capacity team (3-5 staff) and in kind support from sponsors.

[Purpose Built Communities](#) will serve as the initial home for the work, with the end goal of it standing on its own as a 501(c)(3).



The Executive Director will initially report to an advisory board led by the Executive Director of the [Atlanta Committee for Progress](#), then to the organizational board once established.

The relationship and collaboration with the leaders of the Neighborhood Partner Organizations will be central to advancing the work.

An implementation grant from [Blue Meridian Partners](#) and the [Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation](#) is expected to provide ~\$45M over five years, to be matched by ~\$55M in additional philanthropic capital. Approximately \$2M per year will support Backbone’s operations.

The relationship and collaboration with the leaders of the Neighborhood Partner Organizations will be central to advancing the work. The organizations include:



Click each organization above for further information.

The Location

Atlanta is a city that blends legacy and possibility in a way few places can. Known as the cradle of the Civil Rights Movement and home to icons whose leadership reshaped the nation, Atlanta remains a landscape of innovation, cultural vibrancy, and community strength. It is a place where global companies, historically Black colleges and universities, and a thriving creative economy coexist with longstanding community anchors and multigenerational neighborhood pride. Atlanta's food, music, and arts scenes reflect a city that is constantly reinventing itself while honoring its roots.

Its neighborhoods are rich with history, resilience, and civic pride, even as they face longstanding inequities in opportunity and investment.

Working in Atlanta means joining a collaborative, committed, and energized civic community. The Executive Director will step into a region where philanthropic partners, city leadership, and neighborhood organizations are aligned around a shared vision for equitable neighborhood transformation and are eager to support the right leader to build, convene, and steward this next chapter.

For potential consideration or to recommend a prospect, please email NRI@BoardWalkConsulting.com or call

Crystal Stephens, Demeika Wheaton,
or **Sam Pettway**, at 404-262-7392.

For the current status of this and other searches, please visit www.BoardWalkConsulting.com.

