

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMISSION OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY, GEORGIA, TO
ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTINUOUS GAPS IN EQUITABLE RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION TO BIPOC
COMMUNITIES AND REAFFIRM COMMITMENT TO PROMOTE HOUSING SECURITY, ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT, AND YOUTH SAFETY TO MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES IN ATHENS-CLARKE
COUNTY, GEORGIA.**

WHEREAS, Athens-Clarke County has a poverty rate of approximately 26.3%, which is significantly higher than the national average, disproportionately affecting marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC), as well as minority businesses, youth and single-parent households;

WHEREAS, access to stable, affordable housing is essential to breaking the cycle of poverty and ensuring equitable opportunities for health, education, and economic mobility in Athens-Clarke County;

WHEREAS, Black-owned and minority-owned businesses are underrepresented in the local economy, facing systemic challenges in accessing capital, technical resources, and economic opportunities that could strengthen community wealth and resilience especially in east and downtown Athens;

WHEREAS, the safety and well-being of Athens-Clarke County's youth are critical to the long-term success of the community, and minority youth face disproportionate risks of exposure to gang violence, lack of educational resources, and limited pathways to employment;

WHEREAS, on November 3, 1992, the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County adopted a Non-Discrimination Ordinance (codified at Section 1-17-1) (the "NDO") prohibiting discrimination against any employee of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, citizenship, age, or disability;

WHEREAS, on June 6, 2006, the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County revised the NDO to also prohibit discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation;

WHEREAS, on September 4, 2018, the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County further revised the NDO for multiple purposes, including clarifying that the prohibition on discrimination based on sex includes pregnancy and to prevent retaliation against individuals who make a complaint pursuant to the NDO;

WHEREAS, on January 5, 2016, the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County passed a Non-Discrimination Resolution condemning unlawful discrimination in any form and calling upon all businesses serving the public within the boundaries of Athens-Clarke County to act in a non-discriminatory fashion with regard to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, citizenship, age, disability, or pregnancy, and to support any investigation into violations of federal or state nondiscrimination laws, statutes, and constitutional requirements;

WHEREAS, on July 5, 2017, Athens-Clarke County Mayor Nancy Denson appointed a Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion to work with staff from the Athens-Clarke County Housing and Community Development Department and the Manager's Office on creating the draft scope of a Diversity and Inclusion plan and working through the facilitation process of the plan itself;

WHEREAS, Athens-Clarke County's FY2020 budget created the Inclusion Office (renamed the Office of People and Belonging in FY2025) to work with all Unified Government departments and offices on areas including race, color, national origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and disabilities to understand, appreciate, and promote diversity in the community, begin to bridge the equity gap, and increase economic mobility;

WHEREAS, the SPLOST 2020 program, voted on in November 2019, allocated \$45,500,000 to affordable housing, \$39,000,000 of which was designated for the redevelopment with the Athens Housing Authority of Bethel Midtown Village;

WHEREAS, on July 7, 2020, the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County resolved that Black Lives Matter with a commitment that extended intense efforts to address systemic racism and demonstrate the importance of Black lives in our community;

WHEREAS, on February 16, 2021, the Mayor & Commission unanimously approved a resolution in support of recognition and redress for Linnentown and Athens-Clarke County Black communities harmed by urban renewal and then later allocated funds equal to the \$2.5 million for affordable housing and a Center for Racial Justice and Black Futures;

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") established the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Program ("SLFRF") in response to the economic and public health impacts of COVID-19. The Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County received approximately \$57.6 million in federal funding for SLFRF programs;

WHEREAS, the White House's 2021, "Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support of Underserved Communities through the Federal Government" encouraged recipients to use SLFRF-funded projects to promote equitable delivery of government benefits and opportunities to underserved communities;

WHEREAS, on August 3, 2021, the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County passed an Unlawful Discrimination Ordinance (codified at Chapter 6-21) to protect and safeguard the right and opportunity of all persons to be free from all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, marital status, familial status, or veteran/military status; and to provide a process by which residents can file discrimination complaints to be investigated by the Athens-Clarke County Attorney's Office;

WHEREAS, on November 2, 2021, the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County created a Human Relations Commission (codified at Chapter 1-29) to foster meaningful dialogue between the community and local government, educate residents on pathways for addressing discrimination, and provide informed policy recommendations to the Mayor and Commission, ensuring a more inclusive and equitable Athens-Clarke County;

WHEREAS, on November 2, 2021, the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County created the Public Safety Civilian Oversight Board (codified at Chapter 3-18) processes and ensures investigation of complaints made by the public regarding sworn public safety officers, as well as reviews, evaluates, and makes recommendations concerning the policies and procedures of the Athens-Clarke County Police

Department, Probation Services, the Clarke County Sheriff's Office, and the Athens-Clarke County Corrections Department;

WHEREAS, on March 1, 2022, the Athens Clarke County Mayor & Commission authorized the allocation of ARPA funds for specific uses and designated program areas including Youth Development and Violence Prevention, Affordable Housing, Homelessness, Business Development and Workforce Support, and Behavioral Health;

WHEREAS, as part of the ARPA allocations, an Affordable Housing Investment Strategy Plan was developed, a Youth Development Plan with the Clarke County School District was written, a Delinquency Prevention Initiative was started with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Athens, the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce coordinated the Athens Achieves! Workforce development plan, and the ACC Business Development and Workforce Support task force recommendations were approved – all with associated funding;

WHEREAS, on August 8, 2023, MGT Consulting Group presented the Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission with an overview, results, findings, and recommendations of a disparity study, which identified purchasing statistical disparities in the Unified Government's utilization of Minority/Women Business Enterprise firms compared to the relevant geographic marketplace;

WHEREAS, on June 5, 2024 Mayor and Commission adopted a Resolution in Support of Athens Youth and Against Gang and Gun Violence aimed at addressing the issues of gang activity and gun violence in Athens, GA. It emphasizes a commitment to creating a safer community for young people by providing resources, support, and opportunities for youth development and stressed the importance of collaboration among local agencies, law enforcement, and community organizations to prevent violence, promote positive alternatives, and offer pathways for young people to avoid gangs and crime;

WHEREAS, as a result of local environmental justice advocates and the efforts of the Unified Government, the contamination of well water in the Black community of Pittard Road was verified in 2024 and the Unified Government provided assistance to affected residents by connecting them to the public water system;

WHEREAS, as a result of the ARPA allocations, numerous organizations and nonprofits received funding between 2001-2024 to assist with housing, youth development and workforce development programming, including but not limited to the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic Justice Coalition• Quality Care for Children• Georgia Cooperative Development Center• Georgia Center for Employee Ownership• Joint Development Authority• Clarke County Mentoring• Books for Keeps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boy and Girls Club centers at Broad Acres, Parkview, Rocksprings, Nellie B;• Goodwill• Envision Athens• Minority Business and Nonprofit Association• Destined Inc.• Read to Succeed• Education Matters Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• East Athens Development Corporation• CCSD Youth Development Initiative• Chess and Community,• YOUTH Partnership (5 groups),• United Community Outreach• First AME Church,• Juvenile Offender Advocate,
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACC High School Completion Initiative Boys and Girls Club Delinquency Prevention Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athens Community Apprenticeship Program Athens Land Trust The College Factory Divas Who Win 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YWCO Georgia Conflict Center Get Stemulated Cultivating a Lifetime of Legacy
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WHEREAS, ARPA funds also were used specifically to develop and run a nonprofit capacity building program that assisted multiple nonprofits, including About Face International, Destined, Inc., Encourage H.E.R. Academy, Farm to Neighborhood, and Juvenile Offender Advocate, many of which primarily served the minority community, and helped them build capacity to qualify for other funding opportunities and provided each with \$40,000 on completion for their capacity building activities.

WHEREAS Athens-Clarke County's Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) programs include the following projects that focus on youth in our communities but that have not yet materialized:

Youth and Community Enrichment Facility Partnership	SPLOST 2011 – Project#22	\$3,002,188.00
East Athens Youth & Community Enrichment Facilities Project	SPLOST 2020 – Project #23	\$4,007,000.00

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County recommits to advancing targeted policies and initiatives that aid in the following areas:

1. Housing Security

- a. Prioritize the development and preservation of affordable housing, with a focus on neighborhoods experiencing the highest poverty rates.
- b. Continue efforts to attain federal funding for rental assistance programs, including emergency aid to prevent evictions and homelessness.
- c. Develop and equitably apply zoning and housing policies to prevent displacement due to gentrification and to seek to ensure that residents can remain in their communities.
- d. Continue to fund nonprofits, including local minority ones, to seek to develop transitional housing and supportive services for residents experiencing homelessness.

2. Economic Empowerment for Black-Owned and Minority-Owned Businesses

- a. Commit to outreach across the community, including in minority populations, so that all residents know about the small business loans made available through the Joint Development Authority of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County and the City of Winterville and about community programs that provide business mentorship, business development training, and access to local government procurement opportunities.
- b. Seek partnerships with the University of Georgia and local organizations to expand access to educational resources, market insights, and technical support for underrepresented entrepreneurs.

- c. Continue to implement the recommendations presented in the 2023 Disparity Study to increase equity and inclusion of minority and women business enterprises in Unified Government contracting opportunities.

3. Youth Safety and Development

- a. Continue investing in youth-focused initiatives, including opportunities through Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services, cooperative endeavors with the Clarke County School District, and local nonprofits, to include after-school programs, summer employment opportunities, and skill-building workshops targeted at neighborhoods with the highest youth poverty rates.
- b. Continue to fund the creation of safe, inclusive recreational facilities and cultural spaces where youth can engage in positive activities and build community connections.
- c. Continue to collaborate with schools, nonprofits, and local leaders to implement restorative justice practices and violence prevention programs, seeking to ensure equitable treatment and support for at-risk youth.

4. Oversight and Community Collaboration

- a. Explore ways to include diverse representatives of our community to participate in resident oversight of funding and programming related to Housing, Economic Development, and Youth Empowerment.
- b. Continue to partner with state and federal agencies, private sector stakeholders, and philanthropic organizations to secure additional funding and resources for Athens-Clarke County.
- c. Ensure all programs and policies are data-driven, regularly evaluated, and adjusted to maximize their impact on reducing poverty and inequity.
- d. Increase community outreach by the Unified Government mayor, commissioners, and staff to recruit more diverse representation in existing boards, authorities and commissions and enforce term limits where they exist and consider adding term limits where they don't exist to reduce over utilization of residents participating on multiple boards, authorities, and commissions;
- e. Request that the Manager direct departments of the Unified Government, with assistance of the People and Belonging Department, to commit to intentional outreach to minority and black communities in order to seek to fulfill the intentions of this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County will dedicate a portion of its annual budget to these initiatives, seeking to create sustainable, long-term improvements in housing, economic empowerment, and youth safety for its most vulnerable residents; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Commission hereby declares that the foregoing preamble and whereas provisions set forth hereinabove constitute, and shall be considered to be, substantive provisions of this Resolution and are hereby incorporated by reference into this Resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, in the event scrivener's errors shall be discovered in this Resolution after the adoption hereof, the Commission hereby authorizes and directs that each such scrivener's error shall be corrected in all multiple counterparts of this Resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, this Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its approval by the Mayor or upon its adoption into law without such approval.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 1st day of April, 2025.

UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY, GEORGIA

By: _____

Mayor



Attest: _____

Deputy Clerk of Commission

Attest: Shmekia Armstrong

