

H125
Years
125 YEARS OF HOPE IN ACTION

Hope Atlanta

FIELD REPORT

MARCH 2025



Dear Friends,

For 125 years, Hope Atlanta has been a beacon of stability for those in crisis, evolving alongside the city of Atlanta. From our early days assisting vulnerable travelers to our leadership in the housing-first movement, our mission has remained clear: to provide safety, stability, and opportunity for those experiencing homelessness.

This year, as we celebrate significant milestones—Atlanta’s airport marking 100 years, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reaching 150 years, and our own 125-year journey—we recognize the collective power of progress. Just as Atlanta has grown from a railroad hub to a thriving metropolis, Hope Atlanta has transformed to meet the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors.

The faces you see on the cover of this report are our neighbors—real people who have experienced homelessness and found hope, stability, and success through Hope Atlanta. Their journeys exemplify the profound impact of our collective efforts and underscore why our mission matters.

One such inspiring neighbor is Ms. Gloria. Her journey included battling addiction and navigating a life where bridges had been burned and hope seemed lost. When nearly everyone had given up on her, including herself, an unexpected act of kindness changed her trajectory. A chance encounter at a Waffle House led to a stranger believing in her potential and writing her a personal check for tuition at Georgia State University. That single moment sparked a transformation. Gloria found the strength to seek help, pursue her education, and overcome her addiction.

Today, Ms. Gloria is a valued member of our team, serving as one of our most successful Support Specialists on our MARTA outreach team. Her resilience and dedication exemplify the power of believing in our neighbors and offering support when it’s most needed. Her story reminds us that sometimes we have the chance to be the lifeline for someone else. Stories like Ms. Gloria’s are ones we will proudly share throughout the year as we lead up to our Heroes for Hope event—I can’t wait for each of you to hear her inspiring journey directly from her. It took many attempts for Gloria to achieve lasting change, reinforcing that addiction is a disease that requires unwavering determination and community support.

Every day, we encounter neighbors facing overwhelming struggles. Each of us has the opportunity—whether through small gestures or significant actions—to make a meaningful difference. Ms. Gloria’s story demonstrates that hope can emerge from adversity when someone chooses to believe and offer support at the right moment.

Homelessness knows no income, color, or age. It affects working parents, veterans, seniors, and young adults—people who never imagined they’d be without a home. The way we treat those without homes defines who we are. We must rise to the challenge, advocate for change, and lift each other up. It is our duty to extend a helping hand, work toward solutions that ensure everyone has the opportunity to thrive, and restore hope to those who need it most.

These stories of resilience remind us that homelessness is solvable. With stable housing, access to mental health care, and economic opportunity, people can and do rebuild their lives. But the challenges are growing.

As we look ahead, we must ensure that organizations like Hope Atlanta remain strong and sustainable. We must rethink our investments in social services—not just in programs, but in the infrastructure that allows them to thrive. Let’s build a future where no one is left without hope.

Together, we can continue this mission.

With gratitude,



Julio Carrillo, CEO



Answering the Call, Building a Stronger Future

Atlanta's Evolution Mirrors Hope Atlanta's Journey

“

Atlanta started as a railroad hub, but it quickly became a town, then a city, and finally a major metropolitan area. Over the long and storied history of the city of Atlanta, there have been many major historical events. As time has passed, Atlanta has become an organizing point for social change and civil rights. Hope Atlanta has a history of helping those in need and over the 125-year history of the agency, Hope Atlanta has evolved just like the city of Atlanta has to become an agency dedicated to

civil rights & social change.

MALCOLM PHILLIPS,
Case Worker



LEGACY

A 125 Years of Hope in Action



1900

THE BIRTH OF TRAVELERS AID IN ATLANTA

Nine Atlanta churches established the Atlanta Women's Missionary Association to assist travelers in crisis, launching Travelers Aid with Mrs. H.L. Stein as its first employee at Union Railway Station.

1917-1919

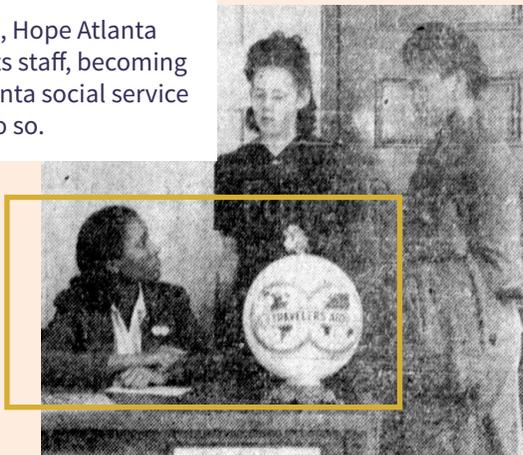
NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN WAR-ERA DISPLACEMENT

Hope Atlanta became part of the National Travelers Aid Association, ensuring aid for displaced families and military personnel.

1940s

PIONEERING SOCIAL CHANGE

During WWII, Hope Atlanta integrated its staff, becoming the first Atlanta social service agency to do so.



1953

EXPANDING SERVICES TO THE ATLANTA AIRPORT

Hope Atlanta established an office at Atlanta Municipal Airport, where it still operates today.

1980s-1990s

ADDRESSING THE GROWING CRISIS OF HOMELESSNESS

The focus shifted to long-term solutions, assisting veterans, individuals with HIV/AIDS, and survivors of domestic violence.

1996

SUPPORT DURING THE ATLANTA OLYMPICS

Hope Atlanta helped 700 stranded youth workers and 40 Centennial Park Bombing survivors with emergency housing and transportation.



2001

POST-9/11 ASSISTANCE

After the September 11 attacks, Hope Atlanta provided emergency aid to over 1,700 stranded travelers.



2005

HURRICANE KATRINA RESPONSE

Hope Atlanta raised \$2.37 million, assisting 12,000 survivors with food, housing, and reunification services.

2009

REBRANDING AS HOPE ATLANTA

Transitioning from Travelers Aid, the agency shifted focus toward permanent housing solutions.

2012

EXPANDING SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

Specialized veteran services launched, providing emergency and long-term housing solutions.



2021

MERGING WITH ACTION MINISTRIES

Recognizing the link between hunger and homelessness, HOPE Atlanta expanded its services to include food security programs.

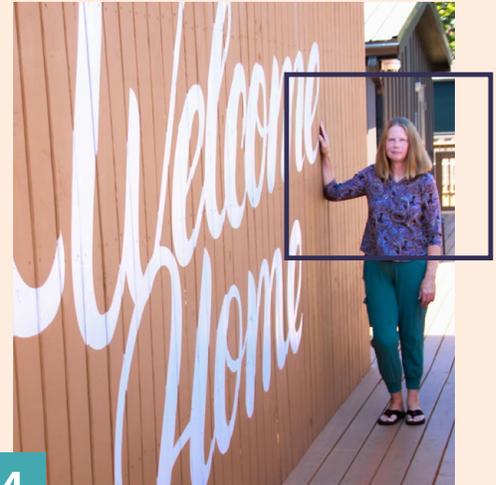
STRONGER TOGETHER:
ACTION MINISTRIES
IS NOW PART OF
HOPE ATLANTA.



2024

LEADING AFFORDABLE AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVES

Hope Atlanta introduced our Behavioral Health Program to offer even more support for our neighbors on their path to stability. Hope Atlanta collaborated on the launch of The Melody, a permanent supportive housing development, where we provide wraparound services.



Continuing a Legacy of Hope

As homelessness continues to rise both nationally and locally in Atlanta, organizations like Hope Atlanta play a vital role in addressing the complex challenges faced by individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Through our comprehensive progressive model of care, low-barrier, client-centered approach, and integration of behavioral health care, Hope Atlanta is uniquely positioned to help reduce homelessness in the city. By focusing on both prevention and long-term stability, **Hope Atlanta ensures that it not only helps people exit homelessness but also empowers them to maintain housing and build better futures.** This holistic, multipronged strategy makes Hope Atlanta an essential leader in Atlanta's efforts to combat homelessness and provide hope to those in need.



Faces of Homelessness

Why We're Seeing More Faces of Homelessness in Atlanta

Homelessness in Atlanta is now visibly scattered across the city, from downtown streets to suburban corners. Today, it's working families, students, veterans, and individuals facing unexpected hardships. In 2023, over 2,600 people experienced homelessness each night in Atlanta, and the numbers continue to grow. Families displaced by economic instability are hopping from family to family, hotel rooms, or living in cars, all while trying to maintain jobs.

Systemic Barriers: The Root of the Problem

Homelessness results from decades of failed policies. At its core, it is a housing crisis driven by a critical shortage of affordable housing in Atlanta. This crisis is part of a larger inequality epidemic, where many individuals are constantly one missed paycheck away from homelessness.

The Housing Crisis: Too Expensive for Too Many

Atlanta's housing market has become unaffordable, leaving many families vulnerable. In 2023, Atlanta needed 70,000 affordable homes, a gap that continues to threaten those already at risk of housing instability.

Chronic Homelessness: A Long-Term Struggle

Chronic homelessness, impacting 33% of the homeless population, involves prolonged or repeated periods without stable housing. Integrated care, including mental health services, addiction support, and job training, is essential for achieving long-term stability.

The Solution is Teamwork: Building a Network of Support

Addressing homelessness requires collective responsibility through partnerships. Hope Atlanta, alongside the City of Atlanta and corporate partners, implements holistic approaches that prioritize permanent housing and essential services. In 2023, Atlanta rehoused 2,000 households, demonstrating the effectiveness of the housing-first model.



Real Change, Real People: Stories of Resilience

Behind the statistics lie real people with inspiring stories

MR. PENDLETON'S STORY

From Homelessness to Helping Others



Mr. Pendleton's journey demonstrates the power of structured support and resilience. Once a successful sales leader and motivational figure, devastating personal and financial setbacks left him homeless and battling substance use. Hope returned when he met Gloria from Hope Atlanta's MARTA outreach team, a Hope Atlanta team member with shared life experience. Through structured support, stable housing, and accountability partnerships, he regained stability and is now proudly employed by Hope Atlanta.

"The respect, compassion, and genuine concern that the Hope family seems to exude is a huge part of what allowed Hope to re-enter into the life of this man who had abandoned it. It is a challenging and terrifying moment when those of us in need finally accept that we cannot do it alone, and we have to put our trust and faith in others. I can assure you that leap of faith will not lead you wrong when you give Hope Atlanta, the opportunity help you take the first steps and continue to walk beside on your journey to self-sufficiency and the happiness possible with Hope in your heart."

THE THE HOPE ATLANTA WAY

Mental health and substance use challenges are deeply intertwined with homelessness, yet barriers to care—provider shortages, financial constraints, and systemic disparities—leave many without support. In Atlanta, the demand for behavioral health services continues to grow, particularly among those experiencing homelessness. To break the cycle of instability, Hope Atlanta integrates mental health resources, substance use programs, and community-based interventions into its housing-first approach. Addressing these needs is not just about treatment, it's about ensuring long-term stability and building a stronger, healthier Atlanta for all.

FACT: Mental health disorders make stability even harder.

IMPACT: 58% of Hope Atlanta clients struggle with mental health.

STATEMENT: A person battling PTSD isn't just struggling emotionally—they may lose their home and job too.



MS. BARRY'S STORY

A Veteran Triumph Over Instability



Ms. Barry, a veteran and mother, overcame homelessness after escaping an abusive relationship. Despite her military achievements, instability and depression left her on the verge of homelessness. Through Hope Atlanta, she accessed stable housing, financial support, and the resources to rebuild her life, reclaiming dignity and security for her family.

“I know it’s cliché but honestly, I owe everything to HOPE. Everything that I have is because of Hope. I have purpose, I have meaning, I have resilient and healthy kids, and I have a home. I am self-sufficient and will always be. I am so grateful. Thank you for being a part of my journey to hope.”

THE THE HOPE ATLANTA WAY

Hope Atlanta stands at the forefront of Atlanta’s fight against homelessness, offering more than just temporary relief—it provides a pathway to lasting stability. Through a holistic, client-centered approach, Hope Atlanta addresses every stage of homelessness, from street outreach to permanent housing solutions. Hope Atlanta works with each neighbor to help them not only receive shelter but also the critical support needed to rebuild their lives. By integrating behavioral health services, financial assistance, and long-term case management, Hope Atlanta creates real, sustainable change—helping people not just exit homelessness, but stay housed for good.

FACT: Georgia’s housing costs have risen **53%**, but wages haven’t kept up.

IMPACT: **8 in 10** extremely low-income Georgians are severely cost-burdened.

STATEMENT: When rent takes up most of your paycheck, one emergency can leave you on the streets.

TRENT'S STORY

Stability, Dignity, and Renewed Hope



Trent found hope and stability through Hope Atlanta's permanent supportive housing initiative, *The Melody*. Living with unaddressed health conditions, Trent moved from uncertainty and survival mode into a stable environment. *The Melody* provided more than housing—it offered dignity, security, and renewed purpose, transforming his outlook and quality of life.

Before moving into permanent supportive housing, Trent's life was filled with uncertainty. He worried about where he would sleep. He struggled to find regular meals. He faced every day with the weight of survival on his shoulders. But today, he says, he no longer has to worry. He has food. He has security. He has a home.

We recently told Trent that he is hope. And he shook his head.

“No,” he said. “This place gave me hope.”

THE THE HOPE ATLANTA WAY

Hope Atlanta's place-based approach goes beyond providing housing—it ensures that individuals and families have the support needed for long-term stability. Through initiatives like *The Melody* and the upcoming *Bonaventure*, Hope Atlanta is creating permanent supportive housing communities that combine safe, stable homes with mental health care, workforce development, and social services. By tailoring solutions to each neighborhood, strengthening local resources, and removing barriers to stability, we are not just housing individuals—we are building stronger, more resilient communities and creating lasting change.

These stories are more than personal triumphs; they are calls to action. They demonstrate the power of stable housing, mental health support, and economic opportunity. They remind us that we must continue to invest in solutions that uplift individuals and strengthen our community as a whole.

FACT: Medical debt is a **leading cause of homelessness.**

IMPACT: Unexpected health crises push families into poverty.

STATEMENT: One hospital stay can cost a family their home and future.

The Power of Partnership

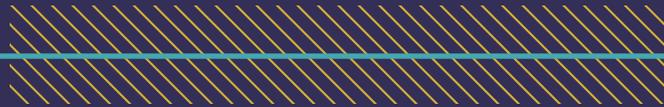
Building a Stronger Atlanta Together

Ending homelessness in Atlanta requires collective effort. Hope Atlanta's success isn't built in isolation. It's grounded in a network of strong corporate partners who provide essential resources to help people transition from homelessness to stability.

The City of Atlanta, under Mayor Andre Dickens, has prioritized affordable housing policies and homelessness prevention strategies, ensuring that resources are allocated to address the crisis at every level.

Corporate partners like The Home Depot, MARTA, Norfolk Southern, and QuikTrip are instrumental in providing financial support, in-kind services, and volunteer programs that expand Hope Atlanta's reach. MARTA connects individuals to housing and resources through its transit stations, while Norfolk Southern and QuikTrip offer grants and long-term sustainability through volunteer efforts.

These partnerships help ensure a comprehensive system of care, allowing people not only to find housing but also to access the necessary tools to remain housed. This is the key to ending homelessness for good.



The Road Ahead

A Shared Responsibility

Homelessness cannot be solved overnight, but Atlanta has shown that significant progress is possible through collaboration and a holistic approach. The solutions are clear, what's needed now is greater investment and scaling of these efforts. Policymakers, corporations, and nonprofits must continue to work together to create a future where homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

The question is no longer whether solutions exist, but whether we have the will and resources to turn them into a reality. Together, we can ensure that no one in Atlanta is left without a stable home and the opportunity to thrive.

www.hopeatlanta.org