

Hope
Atlanta

FIELD REPORT

Q2 2026

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FROM OUR CEO



Dear Atlanta,

Not long ago, a woman named Letha woke up in Woodruff Park on one of the coldest mornings of the year.

Like so many others experiencing homelessness, she carried more than a backpack. She carried uncertainty. She carried exhaustion. She carried the weight of wondering where she would sleep that night and whether anyone truly saw her.

Today, Letha wakes up in her own apartment.

Every morning, she says the same thing: "I thank God for my place."

That simple statement reminds us why this work matters.

At Hope Atlanta, we often talk about housing, outreach, prevention, and supportive services. Those words are important. They describe programs, strategies, and systems. But behind every statistic is a **human story**. A veteran reconnecting with stability. A family avoiding eviction. A traveler at the airport finding a path to services instead of another night of uncertainty. A woman like Letha finding not just housing, but **hope**.

This quarter's Field Report is filled with stories of what becomes possible when a city chooses collaboration over fragmentation and action over indifference.

We see it in Downtown Rising, where partners across Atlanta have come together to move hundreds of individuals from homelessness to housing.

We see it in the dedicated outreach teams distributing cooling kits during Georgia's hottest months because compassion often begins with meeting immediate needs. We see it in the growing collaboration among the City of Atlanta, MARTA, Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, Partners for HOME, Gateway Center, and countless others who understand that no single organization can solve homelessness alone.

Because homelessness is not just a housing issue.
It is a health issue. An economic issue. A workforce issue.
A community issue.
And ultimately, it is a **human issue**.



FROM OUR CEO

The truth is that Atlanta's future will not be measured only by the buildings we construct, the businesses we attract, or the events we host. It will be measured by how we treat those who are struggling to find their footing. It will be measured by whether opportunity reaches every neighborhood and whether hope reaches every person.

As our city welcomes the world through major events and unprecedented growth, we have a responsibility to ensure that progress includes everyone. The momentum we are building today must extend far beyond a single moment, a single initiative, or a single year.

At Hope Atlanta, we believe every person deserves the opportunity to build a life of dignity, stability, and purpose.

That belief drives our work every day.

And while the challenges before us remain significant, I have never been more optimistic about what is possible. Because I have seen what happens when nonprofits, businesses, government leaders, philanthropists, faith communities, and neighbors come together around a shared vision.

I have seen people move from surviving to thriving.

I have seen strangers become partners.

And I have seen hope turn into action.

Thank you for standing with us. Thank you for believing in a stronger Atlanta. And thank you for helping create pathways home for thousands of our neighbors.

Together, we are proving that hope is more than a word.

Hope is a strategy.

Hope is a commitment.

Hope is how we build the future.

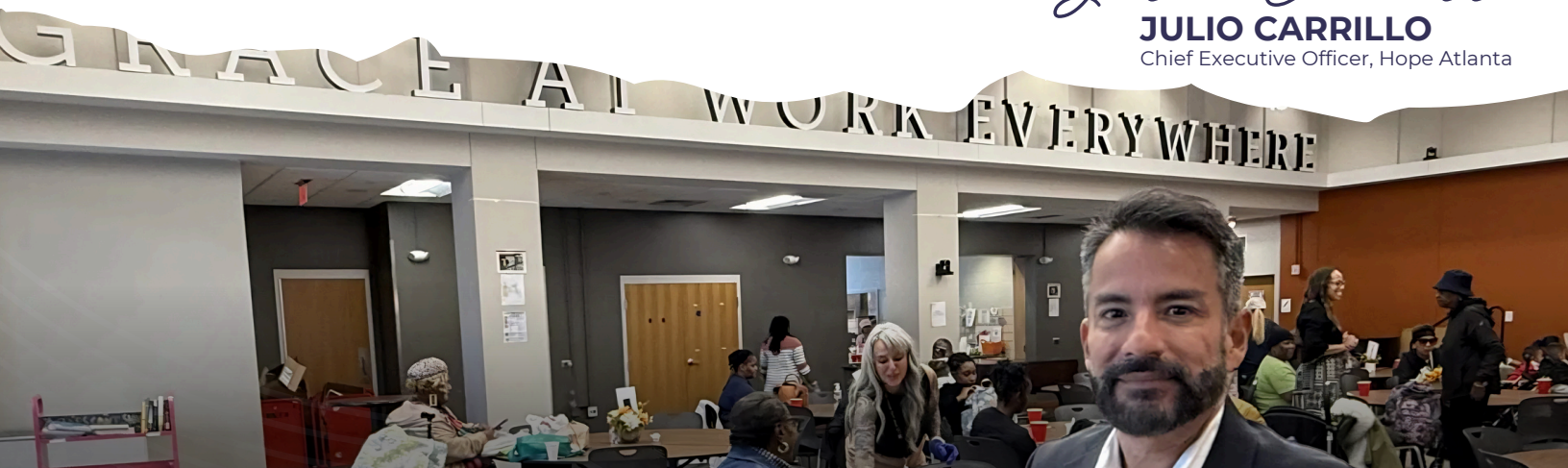


With gratitude,

Julio Carrillo

JULIO CARRILLO

Chief Executive Officer, Hope Atlanta





A Look Back: From Lift to Rising



The Lift program was a flagship rapid rehousing initiative launched by the city of Atlanta and Partners for HOME in 2020 to combat homelessness during COVID-19. Lift 1.0 and Lift 2.0 established an important foundation for Atlanta's evolving response to unsheltered homelessness. These programs underscored the continued need for supportive resources such as food assistance, Social Security benefits navigation, veteran services, mental health support, and other stabilization services that help individuals sustain housing and achieve long-term stability.

Lift 2.0 successfully housed numerous individuals by transitioning residents from encampments throughout the City of Atlanta into Rapid Rehousing units. Through the program's one-year Rapid Rehousing model, clients received Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), which provided up to one year of rental and utility assistance to help establish housing stability and reduce barriers to maintaining permanent housing.

The implementation of Lift 2.0 helped identify critical areas where additional support and long-term planning were needed. These areas included strengthening future planning efforts, expanding permanent supportive housing opportunities, and improving coordinated strategies for addressing encampments in a way that prevents them from rebuilding over time.

How Lift 1.0 & 2.0 Shaped Downtown Rising Outreach

Downtown Rising builds on the framework established through Lift 1.0 and Lift 2.0 by applying a broader, more targeted, and data-informed approach. This evolution has created a more coordinated and intentional model for addressing homelessness, housing instability, and long-term client success across Atlanta.

Lift 2.0 also helped lay the foundation for the Downtown Rising Initiative by highlighting opportunities to strengthen collaboration among partnering agencies. **One of the key lessons learned was the value of dividing downtown areas into targeted zones, allowing organizations to focus on specific sections while contributing to a larger coordinated effort across the city.**

Lift 1.0 housed 800 people experiencing homelessness through rapid rehousing and diverted another 400+. Adding to that, Lift 2.0 housed over 1700 people. Now, in less than a year, Downtown Rising has successfully housed and rehoused nearly 500 with that number increasing weekly.

Looking ahead, the next phase will place increased emphasis on wraparound supportive services, including employment assistance, income stabilization, healthcare access, and connections to community-based resources that can strengthen long-term housing stability and self-sufficiency.





Cooling Kits to *Defeat the Heat!*

In response to the upcoming summer season and the anticipated impact extreme heat will have on our unhoused neighbors, Hope Atlanta’s Community Engagement team collaborated with the Outreach & Emergency team earlier this year to develop Summer Cooling Kits – practical warm weather relief kits designed to help individuals stay cool, hydrated, and protected during the summer months.

Each kit includes essential items such as body wipes, electrolyte packets, deodorant wipes or deodorant sticks, bottled water, SPF lip balm, and rain ponchos, all packed in reusable bags for easy distribution during outreach efforts.

You can help by donating the items needed, having your team create kits, or donating to Hope Atlanta.



Extreme heat shouldn’t be a threat to anyone’s health. These kits provide *relief, comfort, and care when it’s needed most.*

To learn more about how you can help,

[Click Here](#)

EACH KIT INCLUDES:



Body Wipes



Electrolyte Packets



Deodorant Sticks



Bottled Water



SPF Lip Balm



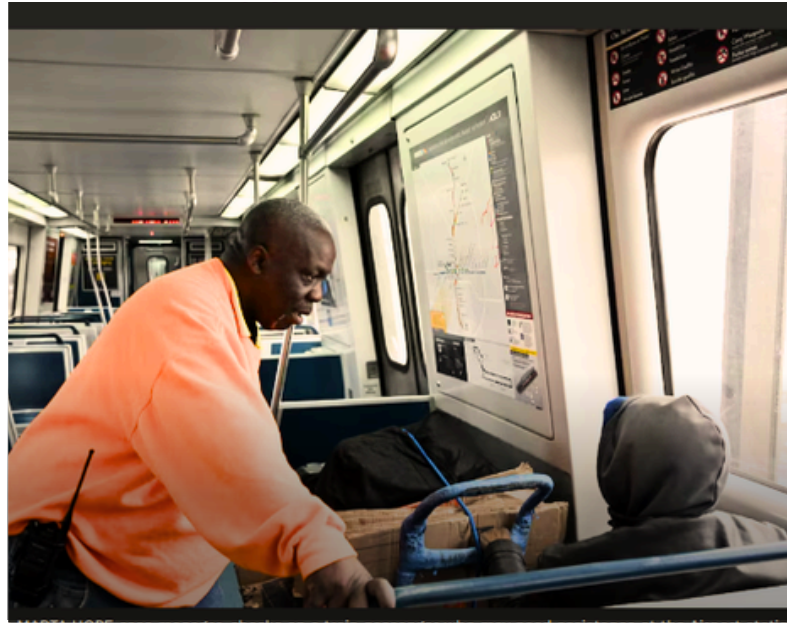
Rain Ponchos



Reusable Bag



A Collective Effort: New Developments Thanks to The Home Depot Foundation



Homelessness at airports is an increasing national challenge, as these spaces often provide safety, transit access, climate control, and basic amenities for people experiencing homelessness. In Atlanta, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport has become a recurring point of refuge for individuals who may not be connected to traditional shelter options and who require more coordinated, person-centered pathways to housing and services.

Hope Atlanta estimates that approximately 40 chronically homeless individuals regularly use the airport, with an additional 60 people present periodically each night. Between 20 and 100 non-airport customers may also arrive on the final MARTA train, requiring coordinated responses from Hope Atlanta staff and the Atlanta Police Department, including transportation to shelter, service enrollment, and individualized engagement.

Recognizing these limitations, Hope Atlanta has convened a cross-sector group including the City of Atlanta/Mayor's Office, MARTA, Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, Partners for HOME, and Gateway Center to collaboratively address homelessness in this unique environment. With funding from The Home Depot Foundation through the Georgia Center for Nonprofit's Building Collaborative Network grant, this effort is moving from informal coordination toward a structured, systems-level response to homelessness at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

*"We are embedded in the Atlanta community and believe **this collaborative network is building on the progress we're seeing in our city.** It's meaningful to see partners from every sector join together and we're excited to propel this work forward."*

The grant supports dedicated facilitation, strategic planning, and identifying opportunities for sustainability in the future.

The Home Depot Foundation's continued investment reflects a meaningful commitment to the city of Atlanta and to our unhoused neighbors. With gratitude for this support, Hope Atlanta and its cross-sector partners are positioned to formalize and establish shared measures of success that can improve outcomes across Atlanta's transit-connected environments.



HEATHER PRILL
Director of Team Depot and Strategic Partnerships for The Home Depot Foundation



Sustaining Momentum Beyond The World Cup: An Interview with Chatiqua Ellison



Chatiqua Ellison serves as the City of Atlanta's Deputy Chief Housing Officer and Senior Advisor on Homelessness to Mayor Andre Dickens. In this interview, we spoke with Chatiqua about sustaining the momentum and progress made through Atlanta/Downtown Rising beyond the World Cup.

Q: Downtown Rising aimed to eliminate homelessness in downtown Atlanta ahead of the 2026 World Cup. How will the city sustain these efforts once the international spotlight fades?

A: The success of Downtown Rising showed us what is possible when the city, service providers, businesses, and community partners operate as one coordinated system. While FIFA has certainly accelerated collaboration and urgency, it is important to emphasize that Atlanta was already making significant investments and progress in addressing homelessness before the international spotlight arrived. What this moment has done is strengthen our coordination, improve communication, and create a more unified response that we believe will have lasting impact well beyond 2026.

Q: Talk to us a little about the collaborative effort with Downtown Rising and the importance of community partners sharing the responsibility of eliminating homelessness.

A: As Mayor Andre Dickens often says, "Atlanta is a group project," and that philosophy has been central to the success of Downtown Rising. Addressing homelessness requires a shared commitment across government, nonprofits, businesses, public safety, faith communities, and service providers. No single entity can solve this challenge alone. Downtown Rising brought together an unprecedented level of coordination among downtown businesses, local stakeholders, supportive service organizations, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, the Atlanta Police Department, and outreach teams working directly with individuals experiencing homelessness. Through Hope Atlanta, dedicated outreach workers engaged individuals sleeping outdoors to connect them with shelter, supportive services, healthcare resources, and pathways to permanent housing.

Those outreach efforts were also coordinated alongside the Atlanta Police Department's H.O.P.E Team to ensure responses remained compassionate, trauma-informed, and centered on connecting individuals to care and stability rather than simply displacement.

The initiative reinforced that long-term progress happens when every sector takes ownership of the issue and works toward a unified goal. FIFA has helped strengthen that alignment, but the foundation of collaboration already existed in Atlanta and will continue long after the tournament concludes.

- 48 days to housing in Downtown Rising vs. 108 days system-wide
- 490 people housed through Downtown Rising May 2025 through May 2026



Q: How is the city ensuring the success of outreach workers and making sure housing-based locations, such as Melody and Waterworks, remain safe and well-maintained communities long-term?

A: Long-term success requires more than simply providing housing. It requires creating stable, supportive communities where residents can thrive and surrounding neighborhoods feel engaged and connected in the process.

At properties like Melody and Waterworks, the city and its partners have intentionally combined housing with strong supportive services, professional property management, and robust safety measures. Residents and community members have direct access to onsite staff and supportive service teams to address concerns quickly, strengthen communication, and foster positive community relationships.

These sites also include enhanced security measures, including 24-hour security personnel, modern surveillance systems connected to the Atlanta Police Department’s camera network, and ongoing coordination with local zone leadership and onsite staff. Equally important, residents have access to licensed social workers, certified peer specialists, case managers, and dedicated property management teams who work together to support long-term housing stability.

We have already seen positive outcomes from this model at Melody, and it reinforces what we know to be true: when supportive housing is paired with strong operational oversight, wraparound services, and community partnership, it can create safe, stable, and successful environments for everyone involved.

Q: What challenges does Atlanta still have to tackle to eliminate homelessness city-wide?

A: One of the greatest challenges continues to be sustainable funding. Unlike some jurisdictions, the City of Atlanta does not have a dedicated funding source specifically tied to housing and homelessness services, which can limit the scale and speed of long-term solutions.

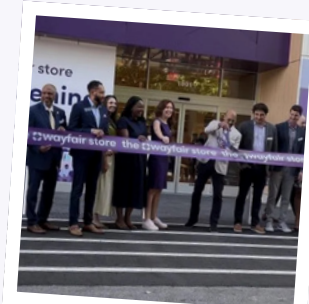
Despite that challenge, the city has made historic investments in addressing homelessness. Under Mayor Andre Dickens’ leadership, Atlanta committed \$60 million through the Homelessness Opportunity Bond, the largest investment of its kind in the city’s history, to support housing development and homelessness response efforts. Over the past two years, more than 1,000 housing units have been developed or advanced as part of that broader strategy.

At the same time, Atlanta continues to experience increased demand as individuals from across Georgia and the country come to the city seeking opportunity, services, and support. Data gathered through the annual Point-in-Time Count and winter warming centers has shown a noticeable rise in the number of individuals entering the system, placing additional pressure on shelter capacity, outreach teams, and supportive services.

There are also ongoing concerns around uncertainty in federal funding, particularly related to housing vouchers and support for Continuum of Care partners like Partners for HOME.

Even with those challenges, Atlanta remains committed to a housing-first approach focused on moving individuals into stable housing as quickly as possible while continuing to strengthen prevention, outreach, and supportive service systems. This work requires sustained partnership across the public, nonprofit, philanthropic, and private sectors, and we are grateful to have a community that continues to step up in meaningful ways to support our unhoused neighbors.

TAKE ACTION. SPREAD HOPE.





HOPE IS KEY.

Finding Her Happy Place: Letha's Story

Letha experienced homelessness for 2 years despite working multiple jobs for most of that time. She spent the winters of 2023 and 2024 living unhoused in Woodruff Park. What Letha remembers most about her time in the park was the brutal cold weather she endured.

“I never want to go back there. It was cold. I hate cold. I was freezing.”

In December 2025, hope began to rise for Letha when she was rehoused through the **Downtown Rising** initiative. She received the keys to her new apartment and is grateful every day for her happy place.

Program on track to house all homeless people in downtown Atlanta by FIFA World Cup

Downtown Rising has housed more than 450 people, with wraparound services to keep them off the streets



“Every time I wake up, I say I thank God for my place. I’m very blessed to have my place,” shared Letha.



WATCH VIDEO

Heroes for Hope

OCTOBER 8, 2026 FLOURISH ATLANTA

HEROES FOR HOPE 2026

A Night of Action and Hope

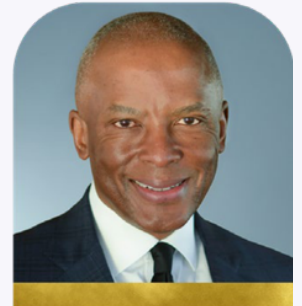
As the spotlight shines on Atlanta in 2026, Heroes for Hope will highlight the leadership and partnerships ensuring our city is strong from the inside out.

On October 8, civic, corporate, and nonprofit leaders will gather for a very special Heroes for Hope gala — a cornerstone of Hope Atlanta’s mission to prevent and end homelessness. This is more than a celebration. It is a powerful reflection of how Atlanta Rising is translating vision into measurable community impact.

OUR 2026 HONOREES

This year we are proud to honor our Individual Hero, Chris Womack, Chairman, President, and CEO of Southern Company, and our Volunteer Hero, Rocky Atkins, Hope Atlanta board chair. We’re also excited to have not one, but two Corporate Heroes, Truist, accepted by Regional President, Katie Saez and The Coca-Cola Foundation, accepted by President, Carlos Pagoaga.

We’ll be honoring those who have gone above and beyond to provide housing stability and food security for our neighbors in need.



INDIVIDUAL

HERO FOR HOPE
CHRIS WOMACK

Chairman, President, CEO
Southern Company



VOLUNTEER

HERO FOR HOPE
ROCKY ATKINS

Hope Atlanta Board Chair



CORPORATE

HERO FOR HOPE
TRUIST

Accepted by Regional President,
Katie Saez



CORPORATE

HERO FOR HOPE
THE COCA-COLA FOUNDATION

Accepted by President,
Carlos Pagoaga

OUR 2026 CO-CHAIRS

Guiding the evening as Co-Chairs are Rose J. Hunter Jones of Hilgers PLLC and Dr. Kofi Smith of Keystone Management — leaders whose cross-sector collaboration reflects the very model Atlanta Rising champions.

Heroes for Hope is not simply a gala. It is a night of celebration, connection, and community impact — where leaders recommit to solutions that prioritize permanent housing, coordinated outreach, and long-term stability.



ROSE J. HUNTER
JONES
Partner
Hilgers PLLC



DR. KOFI SMITH
CEO
Keystone
Management

Interested in Becoming a Sponsor?

If you want to support Heroes for Hope and help continue Hope Atlanta’s mission to end homelessness in Atlanta, contact Vivien Dumford:

vdumford@hopeatlanta.org



Thank you for exploring Hope Atlanta's
Q2 2026 Field Report.

Visit [HopeAtlanta.org](https://hopeatlanta.org) to stay connected, explore
volunteer opportunities, make a donation, and discover how you
can **spread hope** to families across Atlanta.

hopeatlanta.org