

Title	0039	02/28/2025
	by Donya Sartor in Southern Cities Economic Inclusion	id. 49796049
	dsartor@jonesboroga.gov	

Original Submission	02/28/2025
----------------------------	------------

Score	n/a
-------	-----

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES SOUTHERN CITIES ECONOMIC INCLUSION INITIATIVE Building Economic Inclusion and Resilience for All In Partnership with With Support from The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Nathan Cummings Foundation Thank you for your interest in participating in NLC's Southern Cities Economic Inclusion Initiative (SCEI) program. Now in its third iteration, SCEI helps municipal and community leaders enhance economic inclusion through peer learning, tailored technical assistance, and grant funding. This opportunity requires participation from core team members representing city leadership and staff committed to developing and implementing the proposed project. Either a single municipality or a group of municipalities may apply. All applications will be scored according to a pre-established rubric. For detailed information about the SCEI project, see full request for proposals.

REQUIRED
PROPOSAL
MATERIALS

A. Contact Information B. Proposal Narrative submitted via an online application portal C. Core Team information: List of key proposed project team members, including a team lead (e.g., a senior official, a leader engaged in economic inclusion in the community, staff member responsible for managing the work, community partner, etc.). D. Materials to Uploaded Proposed project budget using provided template Support letter from the mayor or other municipal executive stating intent to fully participate in the SCEI project (optional) Provide any supporting information (such as documents, reports, press releases, etc.) that provides evidence related to your responses; clearly indicate where the supporting information is relevant.

Contact Information for Team Lead	Donya Sartor
Title	Mayor
Municipality	City of Jonesboro
Email	dsartor@jonesboroga.gov
Organization	City of Jonesboro

Organization Address 1859 City Center Way
Jonesboro
GA
30236
US
33.5231731
-84.3601356

Second Team
Contact Information ChaQuias
Miller-Thornton

Second Team Title City Manager

Second Team
Municipality City Jonesboro

Second Team Email cmthornton@jonesboroga.gov

Second Team
Organization City of Jonesboro

Second Team
Organization's
Address 1859 City Center Way

Jonesboro
Ga
30236
US
33.5231731
-84.3601356

Third Team Contact
Information Andrew
Simpson

Third Team Title Economic Development Director

Third Team
Municipality City of Jonesboro

Third Team Email asimpson@jonesboroga.gov

Third Team
Organization City of Jonesboro

Third Team
Organization's
Address 1859 City Center Way
Jonesboro
GA
30236
US
33.5231731
-84.3601356

Alternative Team
Contact Information

Alternative Team
Title

Alternative Team
Municipality

Alternative Team
Email

Alternative Team
Organization

Alternative Team Organization's Address	1859 City Center Way Jonesboro GA 30236 US 33.5231731 -84.3601356
---	---

Choose one of the following boxes to describe your application:	Our application is for one municipality.
---	--

If you selected "Our application represents a partnership between municipalities", then please answer the following:

Proposal Narrative

Proposal Title	Include Jonesboro: Supporting Businesses Through Inclusive Procurement Policies
----------------	---

Project Purpose	To improve the Jonesboro’s procurement policy to ensure equitable opportunities for diverse businesses, foster economic growth, promote community engagement through accessible procedures, and transparent practices.
-----------------	--

Project Background: Describe any existing economic inclusion or mobility initiatives in your municipality, how the mayor or other elected leaders support these efforts, and current opportunities to increase economic inclusion in your municipality or region.	The City of Jonesboro is committed to an organizational culture that fosters inclusivity throughout all of the City’s municipal functions. In 2024, Mayor Sartor began making monthly Diversity, Equity and Inclusion presentations during the Council meetings. These presentations focused on intentional inclusion, generational and other forms of diversity, racial equity, bias acknowledgement and understanding DE&I. Presentations were made in public forum to bring awareness to the need for DE&I within the City’s operations and systems – with the goal of ultimately invoking a necessary shift in the culture of our marginalized community. In addition to Mayor’s DE&I presentations, the City Council has committed to implementing strategies related to the improvement of economic outcomes within the community. During FY2025 budget adoption, the elected body established and voted to fund a separate Economic Development Manager position. The City also has strategically positioned itself in partnerships with agencies like Atlanta Regional Commission and Aerotropolis Atlanta – organizations committed to improving the regional economic competitiveness of the area – to include the City of Jonesboro. As a segment of the City’s strategy to improve inclusivity within operations, the Mayor has charged City Administrators/Directors with identifying operations and systems that warrant a shift towards increased inclusivity. Therefore, a current need has been identified for enhancing equitable access to resources, opportunities and systems within the City’s procurement procedures. A review of the City’s procurement/purchasing policies confirmed that the procurement structure requires revisions that allow for an inclusive approach to individual and community participation in the economy.
Project Overview and Goals: Describe your proposed economic inclusion strategies if you were to be selected into SCEI. Include a response to the following questions in your answer: What is your municipality’s or region’s capacity to implement the proposed strategy? What are the anticipated challenges to implementation? What are the anticipated outcomes? Does your initiative target any specific groups?	The City’s proposed economic inclusion strategy is to assess the current state of procurement DE&I (currently ongoing); to cultivate an inclusive procurement culture; to establish clear and measurable goals; to partner with diverse suppliers; to track progress and measure results; to actively engage the community throughout the initiative; and to celebrate the success of the initiative while recognizing all of its partners. The City - with its local, regional and other identified partners - has the capacity to implement the proposed strategy. City staff (Mayor, Manager, Finance Director, Economic Development Manager and Mainstreet Manager) are engaged in assessing the current state of procurement DE&I through policy review and the identification of policies and procedures implemented by other organizations that will aid the City in meeting its outcomes for this initiative. The City has also reinstated its relationship with the Georgia Procurement Registry to engage suppliers that might fulfill the standards of the initiative. The City is confident that implementation capacity can be fulfilled through partnerships with National League of Cities, the Atlanta Regional Commission, Clayton County Government and Agencies, Aerotropolis Atlanta and other partners. These partners will be engaged to provide technical support for gathering data, sourcing information, and measuring outcomes; to assist in engagement within the

If so, who and why? local, county and regional community; and to aid the City in overcoming challenges to implementation.

One of the anticipated challenges in implementation is effectively communicating the culture shift towards a more inclusive procurement environment to the local, county and regional community. It has been determined that some communities' social and cultural norms and traditions may influence the financial behaviors and decisions that have resulted in non-inclusive practices. As the City composes and implements a procurement strategy that presents changes in historical processes, the City will need to communicate shifts in culture and changes in operations to alter perspectives that have been shaped by previous procedures. This communication must be clearly conveyed to internal stakeholders (elected officials and staff) within policy directives and through training, to external stakeholders (community members, vendors, suppliers, contractors, etc.) through various forms of outreach, and to the City's economic development partners. The City does have media platforms like its official website and social media. However, viewership and followers are limited. Therefore, more effective means to communicate the transition to economic inclusivity must be identified and implemented. Potentially, reinstatement of the City's newsletter and establishment of the Jonesboro Government 101 (Citizens and Stakeholders Academy) series will offer additional means of communicating new and inclusive procurement policies and procedures. Technical assistance and funding resources can aid in the realization of such platforms for communication.

An additional challenge, as anticipated, is identifying diverse supplier base. There are various procurement platforms that exist for suppliers on a sign-up basis but there is no centralized source of diversity data. There is also the challenge of ensuring that identified and chosen suppliers deliver contracts that are inclusively designed. This will require the establishment of non-standardized policy legislation and procurement processes that allow for organizational discretion to be applied. Having the ability to engage partners with specialized knowledge and skills in drafting appropriate legislation and policies and in creating necessary exemptions in specific areas will aid in the project's goal to create accessibility and equity for minority and diverse businesses. Access to these specialized skills and knowledge, along with input from City staff regarding procedural and process capacity, will be key in ensuring success of the inclusive procurement initiative and in achieving anticipated outcomes.

Anticipated outcomes of this economic inclusivity initiative are:

Economic growth through increased partnerships and opportunities with small and diverse businesses, contractors, and suppliers;

Economic impact through the strategic leveraging of spending within the

supplier selection process – turning dollars spent into positive impact on employment and economic scenarios;

Localized job creation and maximization of job growth – playing a role in expansion opportunities by giving small businesses a chance to participate in the procurement process; and

Immediate impact on the culture shift towards equitable and inclusive practices. This local level shift will provide direct access to businesses and community served.

The initiative will target...

Small Businesses

Statewide - Small businesses make up about 99.7% of all businesses in the state of Georgia, providing hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Regionally – The metro-Atlanta region is leading in new small business applications.

The majority of established business enterprise within the City of Jonesboro is comprised of small and entrepreneurial businesses.

Women- and minority-owned companies

Approximately 42,000 (47.7%) of all Georgia businesses are women-owned

Georgia is home to approximately 646k (42.5%) minority-owned, small businesses

Metro Chambers report that the rate of minority-owned businesses in the metro Atlanta area triple that of the U.S. These minority businesses play a critical role in fueling metro Atlanta's economy.

The City of Jonesboro will position itself to engage in and to aid in enhancing the drive towards economic growth by ensuring that its procurement practices improve opportunities for small and minority businesses to participate in its local procurement processes.

Partnerships: What partners are engaged in your economic inclusion efforts now and how do you plan to engage local partners strategically to increase the potential success of your strategy? Include any partnerships between municipal departments as well as with external partners. Please describe the roles of each partner.	The city of Jonesboro is committed to fostering inclusive environments that celebrate diversity and provide equitable opportunities for all. We believe that collaboration with like-minded organizations amplifies our collective impact and drives meaningful changes within our communities. We engage in economic vitality through our economic development department and partner with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the Clayton County Chamber of Commerce, Clayton County Economic Development, Clayton County, Atlanta Regional Commission, and Aerotropolis Atlanta. The DDA will facilitate funding opportunities to specifically stimulate downtown development. The Clayton County Chamber of Commerce represents Jonesboro businesses through advocacy and networking. We utilize the chamber to obtain demographics to recruit and retain our business base. Clayton County Economic Development through business attraction and retention encourages new and existing businesses to expand and thrive. We utilize them through grants and development programs to support community revitalization. We look to increase diverse partnerships, through economic vitality initiatives. Clayton County implemented the Tara Boulevard Livable Centers Initiative. The process builds consensus among Jonesboro residents and community members, with a roadmap bringing the community closer to its identified vision. The study will identify opportunities for housing (including attainable), services, and mobility improvements. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) provides demographics for individuals, community organizations and businesses, regarding transportation for workforce development, accessibility, and connectivity. Aerotropolis Atlanta's vision is to create an inclusive destination. They showcase properties in the city of Jonesboro that are currently being developed or open to investment opportunities. Core initiatives include economic, community, and workforce development.
---	--

Data: What data is your team currently tracking related to your proposed economic inclusion strategy? What additional data is necessary to track progress on your proposed project goals?

We are currently not tracking data that is significantly relevant to the project. However, our Downtown Development Director does track business and demographic related data within the surveys that are gathered at City events.

Our Downtown Development community survey asks its participants the following regarding demographic data. Their age, ethnicity, gender, residence, workplace, and whether they would live in the downtown. The survey then asks the participants about their retail habits. What is their favorite time and day to shop, what is their favorite business to patronize, and what businesses would they like to see in the downtown. The City will need to track business data related to business size, ownership ethnicity, number of contracts held with the City, number of employees employed by the business, value of contracts/engagement and other forms of economic and/or business data to track progress on the proposed project goals.

Team Capacity: Describe the commitment of your "core team" to participate fully in peer learning and technical assistance opportunities provided. If selected, how will one or more staff be given the bandwidth to participate?

City of Jonesboro's core team for this project consists of staff members across the finance, community development, and economic development departments. Our City Manager is also a member of the team and will provide oversight among departments. The core team is fully committed to actively engaging in all peer learning and technical assistance opportunities included with this opportunity. We have carefully considered the project timeline and made the necessary adjustments to have the appropriate team members present at all activities. Additionally, we will schedule core team meetings as often as necessary to update everyone on our progress with the project.

The city leadership will grant the respective team members with bandwidth to engage in training sessions, webinars, and peer exchange activities during scheduled times that minimize disruption to ongoing projects. We will prioritize their involvement by adjusting workloads where necessary and providing the necessary resources, such as time and logistical support, to fully participate without compromising other key responsibilities.

One of the many advantages of a small city is that team members are cross trained across several departments. As a result, staff often perform the duties and responsibilities of their colleagues. This also allows time for the core team to work on the project while making sure their other responsibilities are fulfilled.

Community
Engagement: Provide one example of how your team has meaningfully incorporated community feedback into city practices and policies in the past.

From the Mayor's perspective:

While on council (prior to becoming Mayor), I voiced my concern about the lack of community engagement. The city would host community forums. However, the attendees that attended did not represent the racial and age demographics of Jonesboro. The feedback would be skewed toward a particular group of residents.

Since I was elected as Mayor in November of 2023, I have worked to collaborate with all residents and community stakeholders. We started monthly community pop up events in the Fall of 2024. The pop events are strategically located in various neighborhoods. Residents and businesses are invited to meet with our city staff and elected officials. We review the feedback after each pop up. Adjustments to city practices such as bill payment, trash service, and communication notifications have been made as a result of the feedback from the pop up events.

We are hoping to learn best practices for incorporating community feedback to inform city practices and policies.

Finances: Describe your process to receive grants from outside entities and the expected time from fund acceptance to fund appropriation.

Grant Management Policy

This policy provides guidelines for the application, acceptance, and administration of funds awarded to the City of Jonesboro through grants from local governments, the state, federal government, non-profits, philanthropic organizations, and the private sector.

A. Grant Applications

The City Manager's Office oversees the submission of all grant applications. Departments wishing to apply must collaborate with the finance department and the City Manager's Office. Once a grant opportunity is identified, the requesting department must notify the City Manager of the application, financial reporting requirements, and any matching funds or other City resources needed. Before accepting a grant, the Director of Finance, in cooperation with the submitting department, will analyze the financial requirements to ensure the City can meet them. All revenues and expenditures, including matching requirements, must be appropriated in the current or subsequent budget. The Mayor and City Council must approve grant applications and submissions through a certified resolution allowing the application submission and acceptance of the award.

B. Grant Administration

The City Manager's Office and Director of Finance coordinate and ensure compliance with financial reporting and accountability requirements for each grant. The finance department and receiving departments must adhere to program requirements and track expenditures for reporting. The finance department also ensures compliance with the Accounting, Auditing, and Financial Reporting Policy and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). They maintain the following records for each grant:

Grant Application

Resolutions authorizing application and acceptance

Notification of Grant Award

Financial reporting and accounting requirements

Funding needs schedule

Rationale: Describe what your team hopes to gain from participation in the SCEI program.

Our team hopes to gain several valuable outcomes from participating in the Southern Cities Economic Inclusion Program. First, we hope to refine our procurement process to include specific inclusion strategies that will address the current inequities of our current policies. Additionally, our team is looking forward to applying the program resources, training, and mentorship to other aspects of our operations beyond the procurement process.

We believe our participation will empower us as a group and individually to better advocate for and implement solutions that increase economic mobility and resilience for residents and businesses.

We are also looking forward to providing a blueprint for small cities like Jonesboro that are not able to participate in a program like SCEI. We believe it is important that we share our experiences, resources, and findings locally and nationally.

Please upload accompanying documents:

[SCEI-Application-Budget-02.20.25.pdf](#)

[Budget_Narrative-NLC_SCEI.pdf](#)

[Economicdevelopmentsupport_letter_1.pdf](#)

[DDA_letter_of_support.pdf](#)

[City_of_Jonesboro.LetterofSupport2.pdf](#)

[City_of_Jonesboro.LetterofSupport1.pdf](#)
