

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

The Honorable Donya Sartor
Mayor, City of Jonesboro, GA

Dear Mayor Sartor,

We are pleased to inform you that the City of Jonesboro has been selected by the National League of Cities (NLC) to move forward with grant funding to the Implementation Phase of the *Southern Cities Economic Initiative (SCEI)*! Your city is one of 14 cities selected for this next two-year phase of SCEI. The other cities selected to participate in the implementation phase are Atlanta, GA; Center Point, AL; Charlottesville, VA; Fayetteville, AR; Greenville, MS; Harrisonburg, VA; Jackson, MS; Lauderhill, FL; Little Rock, AR; Monroe, LA; Natchitoches, LA; New Orleans, LA; and Thomasville, NC.

We are excited to continue our partnership with your city to elevate and implement local strategies that boost economic mobility and resilience for residents. This phase will run from January 2026 to December 2027. Jonesboro is being awarded \$37,348 to be spent toward the implementation of your project. Funds will be distributed in two phases: the first half will be disbursed upon both parties signing the attached MOU beginning in January 2026. The second half will be disbursed upon NLC approval of an interim report to be submitted by October 31, 2026.

NLC is implementing this project in collaboration with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta¹ and with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, and the Nathan Cummings Foundation.

This letter and its attachments describe important next steps and a set of key documents that require your attention. Please review these details carefully.

¹ The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta does not provide funding, nor does it participate in participant selection or decisions of grant funding of SCEI participants.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): The attached MOU must be signed and returned to NLC by **Monday, January 31, 2026**. If you require additional time to complete and return the signed document to NLC, please reach out to Ayesha Mehrotra at Mehrotra@nlc.org.

Grant disbursement: To facilitate the distribution of your implementation grant, NLC requires a **signed MOU** along with a completed **ACH form and W-9**. There is no need to complete these forms if you submitted them for the first planning phase payment unless your payment information has changed.

Media strategy: We encourage you to announce your city's selection in this next phase of the SCEI project publicly. A **Communications Toolkit** is forthcoming in January and will include sample language to help you effectively share your participation in the project with the media and align your message with NLC's communications strategy.

SCEI Mandatory Meetings

Monthly All-City Calls: As with the planning phase, NLC will host mandatory monthly calls for city teams, typically on the first Thursday of each month. These calls will serve as learning opportunities for participating cities to come together as peers to reflect on goals and strategies. The first monthly call is scheduled for **January 15, 2026, at 1:00PM Eastern Time**. NLC will follow up soon with your city's team lead to provide more details, including a zoom link for the meeting.

Monthly Individual Technical Assistance Sessions: We will also continue our monthly one-on-one technical assistance calls with your team to check in on project progress, lend expertise and provide additional support and resources as needed.

In-Person Convenings: During the two-year implementation phase, we will include **four** in-person convenings for participating cities.

- Project teams will be required to attend three *implementation convenings*. The first of these will take place **February 18-20, 2026** at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's offices in Birmingham, AL. Three members of each city team are invited to attend with travel covered by NLC. More information on travel booking is forthcoming. The remaining two convenings will be held in 2027 – more information will be shared as we approach Year 2.
- City leaders will be required to attend one *Leadership Convening* in Atlanta, GA in **May 2026 (exact dates TBD)**. This convening is intended for a team of two from each city that includes (1) mayor, other elected leader, city manager, or city chief administrator; and (2) a local community leader. The meeting will focus on leadership development and data-informed strategies to build economic opportunities and grow local economies.

Thank you for your attention to these next steps. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions about the project or any of the materials in your acceptance packet by contacting Ayesha Mehrotra, Program Manager, Economic Opportunity and Financial Empowerment at mehrotra@nlc.org.

Congratulations on your selection for SCEI's Implementation Phase! We are delighted to continue working with you as you move to action with your city's strategies to support the economic mobility of local communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heidi Goldberg". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Heidi Goldberg
Director, Economic Opportunity and Financial Empowerment

Cc: Faith Akuta, Economic Development Manager