

VERSION 3

“Breaking Barriers through Deconstruction” Workforce Development Coalition PILOT PROJECT DESCRIPTION & VALUES STATEMENT

We have inherited an economic system that sets boundaries and exclusionary policies that is extractive, exploitative and degenerative of Atlanta’s Westside communities. This Coalition is intended to be regenerative in that it removes barriers and replenishes and restores the community.

Our Coalition brings together community-based organizations to create a deconstruction workforce development pathway facilitated by and for Atlanta’s westside communities. The Coalition trains residents by moving them through a series of experiential education modules related to deconstruction and regeneration¹ in the built and natural landscapes. Participating organizations teach modules based on their diverse areas of expertise. Upon completing the full course, trainees will have acquired workforce skills related to deconstruction, regeneration, and community leadership.

This pathway:

- Brings **ancestral knowledge** to the forefront, prioritizing and infusing a relationship with nature to restore our planet's ecosystem, allowing the living world to flourish once more.
- Emphasizes **intergenerational teaching and learning**, incorporating the longstanding knowledge of elders related to construction, repurposing, and rebuilding, and building relationships across generations.
- Gives people the power to shape their own future with workforce development as a mechanism for **advancing equitable community development**.
- Is grounded in the **history and assets of westside communities**, including the “lungs of Atlanta,” which trees providing fresh air for the — preserving the trees that are now literally the lungs of Atlanta. Their close relationship serving as stewards of the natural environment, often referred to as the “lungs of Atlanta,” as well as the centrality of building and construction in their history.

VERSION 3

Based on these values, the pathway will be designed with attention to five areas:

1) Process:

- a) Organizations from westside communities will fully collaborate with Lifecycle Building Center on curriculum development to ensure the curriculum aligns closely with community assets and concerns and with organizational missions and goals.
- b) The curriculum should be intentionally designed to strengthen connections among organizations and to create a stronger Coalition, building capacity and advancing the impact of each network organization.
- c) The program should be designed and funded to eliminate inequities related to access, transportation, income, etc.
- d) The program takes an explicitly anti-sexist and anti-racist approach to workforce development, building on the six [Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing](#), which include:
 - i) Be inclusive
 - ii) Emphasis on bottom-up organizing
 - iii) Let people speak for themselves
 - iv) Work together in solidarity and mutuality
 - v) Build just relationships among ourselves
 - vi) Commitment to self-transformation.

2) Curriculum:

- a) The training curriculum will be created by Coalition members, tailored to the assets and needs of Atlanta's westside communities, and also informed by curricula from other parts of the country.
- b) Training should engage and benefit multiple generations, from "K to grey."
- c) Experiential education modules will be run by different members but connected to create one or multiple pathways.

3) Individual Impact:

- a) Trainees will grow both professionally and personally.
- b) They will also strengthen their connections to their communities and grow as community members and leaders.

VERSION 3

4) Community Impact:

- a) Atlanta's westside communities should benefit from this program, through trainees' growth as community members as well as through community improvements in the built and natural environments.
- b) The program should also have a positive environmental impact, making green home improvements that simultaneously decrease energy burden.

5) Inclusive Impact:

"Success Scenarios"

The pathway will be designed to achieve impact in four categories. Here are a few descriptions of what that impact might look like:

Category 1: Individual Trainee Impact

- Trainees will develop new skills in deconstruction, putting them at the cutting edge of this emerging industry, and will have access to expanding in the industry via entrepreneurial pathways.

Category 2: Community Impact

- During the program, trainees will do home repair for legacy homeowners, many of whom are elderly, single-household women whose homes were built in the early 20th C. (1940s/50s) and have high levels of deferred maintenance and whose limited incomes don't allow them to address these repairs. Trainees' work on their homes will allow for these improvements to occur at a fraction of the cost, and the improvements will also improve health and safety and solve some environmental challenges for these women and their families, including grandchildren who spend time in their homes.
- Work done on home improvements as part of this training program will benefit our communities in multiple ways. For example, residents will be able to stay in their homes rather than move and their homes will increase in value, and salaries paid to trainees will stay in the communities where they both live and work. Lastly, the community-based organizations that provided the training - us - will have expanded our organizational footprint and capacity in the community.

Category 3: Organizational Impact

- *General Organizational Structure:* Prospective model is based on public policy theorist Bruce Jansson's [Policy Analysis Framework](#). Policy analysis and organizational growth should be systematic and use qualitative and quantitative data – good to articulate these goal differences. The goal is that through workforce development training the community can learn that deconstruction and material reuse are all inclusive. It is not a zero-sum

VERSION 3

game and utilizing LBC's network and coalition based organizational structure we are better prepared than ever to bring this across to the wider community. It is important to emphasize the depoliticization of deconstruction in an effort to attract as wide a base of grassroots support as possible as these issues defy polarity (affordable housing in West-End communities, etc.); deconstruction is all-inclusive and comprehensive in its scope, scale and benefits in the community. Positive reinforcement of this training using empowerment practice and interpersonal helping skills creates an environment suitable for the trainees to perform comfortably and strategically with a well-placed curriculum. Anti-Racist and Anti-Sexist specifically due to the predominance of male voice in the construction industry – heterogeneity is beneficial to organizational growth and policy formation, as over-predominance of privileged voices (male, white, cisgender, etc.) risks alienating participants.

- *City of Atlanta:* The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) created the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program to provide Public Housing Authorities a tool to preserve and improve public housing properties and address the \$26B nationwide backlog of deferred maintenance. The Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta (AH) is utilizing this tool as a means to improve its public housing and ensure the units remain permanently affordable to low-income households. Although deconstruction and reuse is a new exploratory concept for AH and agreements will be required, Breaking Barriers could lead to multiple positive impacts on community-based organizations: (1) Saving the building materials of RAD conversion projects from the landfill provides favorable circumstances for nonprofits to assist low-income homeowners to reuse the materials for home improvements thereby reducing home equity theft. These materials might include: kitchen & bathroom cabinets, windows, light fixtures, appliances, flooring and other items; (2) An opportunity to educate AH Landlords about orderly disassembly of kitchen, bathroom and other materials for donation and reuse; and (3) Support for workforce development, skilled trades training, jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities. The ultimate intent is to foster local economic development, neighborhood economic improvement, and individual self-sufficiency.

Category 4: Coalition Impact

- This pathway will aid us in developing a true collaborative that will leverage the collective strengths and assets of each organization to maximize the allocation of benefits to those communities that need it most.

VERSION 3

- Key is a working coalition of community organizations that can partner with each other, other community assets, and institutions to develop a shared vision, attract significant funding, and develop strategic and competitive projects that benefit communities and increase capacity and investments.
- By working collaboratively, the Coalition is able to co-design solutions from the onset of development to ensure alignment, share resources, and maintain accountability for the training program to stay centered in being a just, equitable and regenerative tool for Atlanta's westside development.
- Our long-term relationships result in a variety of benefits including funding, publications, organizational capacity-building, and a strengthened partnership infrastructure that nurtures strong personal relationships and networking, all resulting in greater community impact. Additionally, the Coalition supports managed growth strategies that help our organizations grow responsibly, in ways that support our communities and ensure organizational longevity for as long as we are needed.