



Project Community Connections, Inc.

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS  
OF CHARTING A PATH TO END  
HOMELESSNESS



# REFLECTING ON THE PAST, EMBRACING THE PRESENT, MANIFESTING THE FUTURE

Our MISSION is to permanently rehouse individuals and families experiencing homelessness into decent, affordable places to live and thrive.

Across 25 years, Project Community Connections, Inc. (PCCI) has helped thousands of people find a safe place to live, access services to improve their outlook and begin a path to self-sufficiency.

Today, building from our successful application of rapid rehousing best practices, we are investing in promising new strategies rooted in research and productive partnerships that are supporting our clients and broadening our scope. We are stepping into our next 25 years with a bold but attainable ambition: to end homelessness in Atlanta, in Georgia, and beyond.

**JIMIYU EVANS | MARGARET SCHUELKE**  
CO-CEOS, PROJECT COMMUNITY  
CONNECTIONS, INC.



**The 2023 Point in Time Count identified 2,679 individuals experiencing homelessness in the City of Atlanta, an increase from the 2022 count.**

Source: Partners for HOME

# Our History: Celebrating 25 Years

## 1998

PCCI is founded by Atlanta business leader and affordable housing advocates Bruce Gunter and Lori Mills.

## 1999

Atlanta's first centralized facility for homeless services, the Resource Opportunity Center, opens.

Respected Atlanta lawyer Larry Lord becomes the first chair of PCCI's board.

## 2005

Mayor Shirley Franklin opens the Gateway Center to address the city's need for shelter and transitional housing beds for those experiencing homelessness.

## 2009

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 is signed, which includes \$1.5 billion for a Homelessness Prevention Fund.

## 2012

The U. S. Department of Veteran Service "Supportive Services for Veteran Families" program begins to address the number of veterans experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. PCCI is one of 85 grantees to be awarded funds in 2012 and every year since.

Margaret Schuelke and Jimiyu Evans attend the White House Ceremony as "Champions of Change for Fighting Youth Homelessness."

## 2013

The Kids Home Collaborative is formed through PCCI's work with DeKalb County Schools, which is acknowledged as a promising start by the National Alliance to End Homelessness and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

## 2017

Long-time PCCI leaders Jimiyu Evans & Margaret Schuelke are named CO-CEOs.

Atlanta is selected as one of five cities to utilize federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families funds; PCCI plays an important part in this initiative.

## 2021

PCCI plays a key role in the City of Atlanta's pandemic response, deploying federal funding to help people experiencing homelessness secure housing to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

## 2020

PCCI is awarded \$2.5 million from Bezos Day One Family Fund.

## 2023

Thrive Sweet Auburn opens.

## 2024

PCCI celebrates 25 years of improving opportunities for people experiencing homelessness.



**PCCI moved 5,600 people into housing over the last decade,  
with 80% exiting to positive outcomes**

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# A New Home at Thrive Sweet Auburn

**In April 2023, eight years of planning and hard work culminated in the opening of Thrive Sweet Auburn.** Built on the former site of our headquarters on Decatur Street near Downtown Atlanta, every aspect of this mixed-use development was intentionally designed to meet the diverse needs of our clients, our partners, our neighbors and our team.

*The site features community amenities including a shared kitchen, outdoor gathering space and parking.*

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*Thrive includes 12,000 square feet of commercial space. Tenants include PCCI, First Step Staffing and others who support residents and build community.*



## Thrive By the Numbers

117	168	112	25
income-based housing units	residents	families	Veterans living in designated units

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**Thank you** to the many people and partners who have been part of the Thrive Sweet Auburn journey, including: Campbell & Brannon | CAPN Clinics | Cox Foundation | DCA | FHLB | First Step Staffing | Fulton County Department of Behavior Health | Grandbridge | Home Depot | Invest Atlanta | Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation | MerchLogix, Inc. | Mercy Housing Gap Fund | Mercy Housing Resident Services | Open Hand | Partners for HOME | Reinvestment Fund | Truist | The Tull Charitable Foundation | The Vasser Woolley Foundation | Waterfall Foundation | Wells Fargo

*Photo Credit: Karen Images*



*"I WOULD SHOUT TO THE MOUNTAIN TOP" about  
how much your help meant to me!! Thanks for  
CARING with your whole HEARTS!!*

*Supportive Services for Veteran Families client*

# Serving Those Who Serve

According to the Atlanta Point in Time Count, **9.4% of people experiencing homelessness in Atlanta are veterans of the United States armed forces.** PCCI is honored to help these individuals secure housing and access services.

PCCI has a dedicated team of professionals who understand the unique needs of service members and how to navigate the programs and systems available to help veterans achieve their goals.

**In 2023, PCCI supported 300+ veterans.**

## Our Partners

*Supporting veterans means working with agencies, organizations and funders. In 2023, we were especially grateful for:* Atlanta VA Medical Center: VA Homeless Programs | Hope Atlanta | Atlanta Center for Self Sufficiency | Home Depot Foundation | National Coalition for Homeless Veterans | Salvation Army | Gateway Center | Mercy Care | Mercy Housing | Veterans Empowerment Organization (VEO) | Crossroads | Furniture Bank of Metro Atlanta | Local Housing Authorities: Atlanta, DeKalb, Decatur, College Park, East Point, Dept. of Community Affairs, Marietta | COC Partners: Atlanta, Fulton, DeKalb and Balance of State



# Removing Limits, Increasing Resiliency

*Over the last year, PCCI implemented a direct funds transfer pilot program that provides qualified recipients with funds to use at their discretion to pay for priority needs. This kind of support offers predictable income, fostering stability and financial literacy.*

Built from a pilot funded by the **Annie E. Casey Foundation** and scaled thanks to a grant from the **Bezos Day 1 Families Fund**, this program is transforming the lives of families.

## By the Numbers

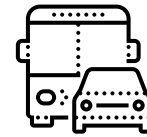
**\$380,000** distributed between 2022 and 2023. Our program supports **100 recipients**, who represent a total of **250 people** living in their households.

Funds are provided for **12 months** to each recipient in the amount of **\$400 per month**

Funds are most commonly used for:



childcare



transportation



food

## Home for Families

“PCCI has played a major part in my life by helping me find my independence and bringing me closer to my two-year-old daughter.”

*Department of Family and  
Children Services client*

In 2023, **PCCI** and the **Georgia Department of Family and Children Services** came together to identify ways to reduce the number of families involved in the state’s child welfare system. A pilot program in Fulton County that offers early intervention housing support is proving to be a successful model. Program partners plan to expand the initiative, aiming to keep Georgia families together and in stable housing.



# Our Operations

*Despite volatile external financial and social circumstances, PCCI has not merely endured over the past few years - we have thrived.*



We have improved our communications, including promoting our work our website, on social media and in our community.

## Our Consulting Services

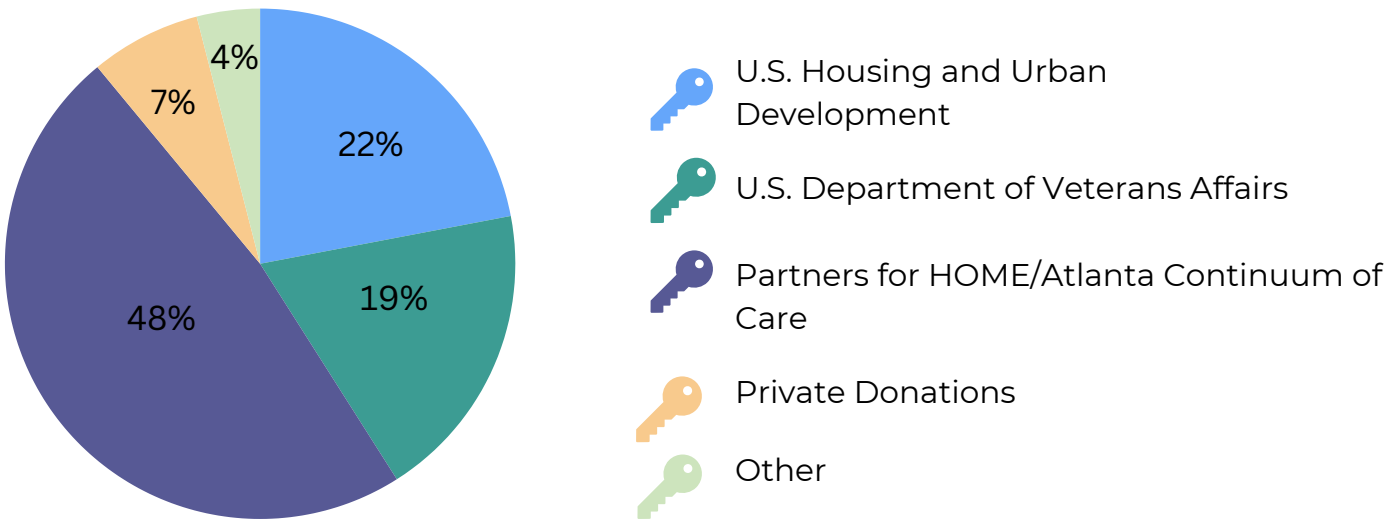
This past year, PCCI was invited to support a number of organizational clients that are interested in replicating the Thrive Sweet Auburn model in their communities. These opportunities serve the dual purpose of generating income for PCCI's mission while also spreading the application for the best practices we have developed.

**35 employees proudly serve our clients**



## 2023 Funds by Source

**PCCI'S 2023 BUDGET WAS \$30 MILLION, WITH THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THOSE DOLLARS REDISTRIBUTED TO FAMILIES**



Building from the past 25 years, **Project Community Connections, Inc.** is planning for a bold future in which our work radiates out from Atlanta. Together with our clients, our partners, government agencies and the philanthropic community, **we can end homelessness** in the city we love, in Georgia, across the Southeast and the entire nation.

Project Community Connections, Inc. (PCCI) is a non-profit organization that builds relationships with property owners, government agencies, and community organizations to help clients become self-sufficient, so they can remain stably housed and *thrive* in all aspects of their lives.

## Board of Directors

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**Project Community Connections, Inc.**



PCCIHome.org



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