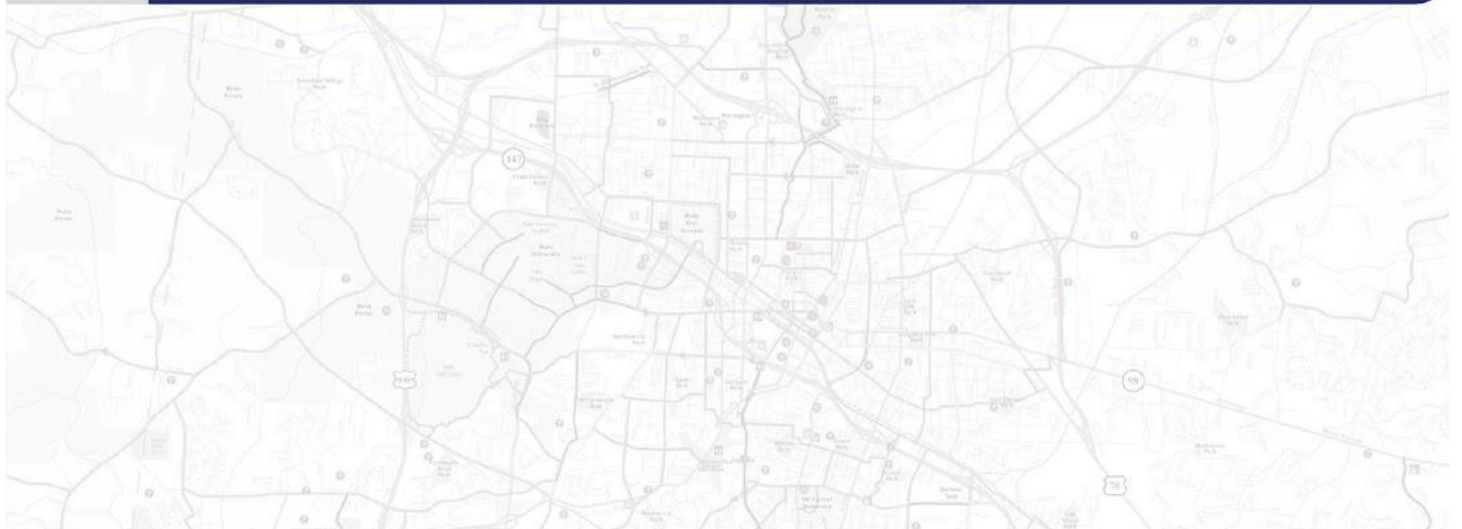


PIERCE
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FOR MAYOR

A Plan for Durham's Future *together.*



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Principles

Community - *supporting diverse and inclusive communities*

Growth - *stimulating innovative and equitable growth*

Youth - *nurturing bold and vibrant youth*

Love - *practicing empathy and demanding accountability*

Framework

Pierce's vision and policies are shaped by a framework of intersectionality. Originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality describes the experience of overlapping identities, such as gender, race, sexual orientation and income status as they relate to systems of oppression.

Issues

The issues Durhamites face today are not the result of happenstance but of conscious policy decisions at the city, state, and federal level. As mayor I'll prioritize Durham's greatest asset, its people.

Poverty

Today, nearly 40% of Durham's children of color live in households that are at or below poverty. These children are our future. Poverty persists throughout our city: Durham's poverty rate has risen from 15% in 2000 to 19.2% in 2015 despite Downtown Durham's prosperity. This means that 1 in 5 people in Durham live in poverty. This is higher than the state (17.4%) and the country (13.5%). As of 2015 over 45,000 residents made an annual income of \$24,036 for a family of four. Much of this poverty is concentrated in historically disenfranchised and disinvested areas of Durham.





Unemployment and Underemployment

The burden of unemployment and poverty are not distributed evenly; African-Americans, Latinos, and female-headed households are disproportionately affected. In Durham, unemployment for blacks tends to be about two times higher than unemployment for whites. As of 2015, unemployment in Durham was 5.5%, but it was 3.1% for whites and 8.6% for blacks. The current minimum wage in Durham is \$7.25, which amounts to only \$15,080 a year before taxes for full-time workers - a salary that is insufficient to meet basic daily needs for workers in Durham.

Gentrification and Displacement

Durham has the highest eviction rate in the state. Last year, between 800 and 1,000 people in Durham were faced with eviction *every month*. The need for affordable housing greatly exceeds the availability, with a mere 38 affordable units for every hundred very low-income households (of which there are about 12,000 in Durham). 52% of renters in Durham are cost burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing. The housing wage needed is 223% of minimum wage. There is a strong need to preserve homeownership for people who already own their homes and are now at risk for displacement due to higher property taxes.

Growing Inequity

Since December 2001, \$1.7 billion in public and private investments have flooded the 0.8-square-mile downtown area in the form of tech startups, world-class restaurants, and trendy hotels. In many poverty concentrated neighborhoods over policing is the primary way in which our city is putting resources to work rather than focusing on creating jobs, parks, and after-school programs. As mayor I will prioritize our greatest asset, our people.





Solutions

The solutions to Durham's challenges intersect and require an equity lens to address the growing disparities in our great city. We have an opportunity empower and support organizations who are already addressing the issues Durhamites face. Conscience policy decisions created many of the challenges we face, conscience policy decisions will help to solve them.

Jobs for All

Economic rights are human rights and unemployment is a public health & safety crisis which has a high social cost to the broader community. A jobs guarantee aims to stand on the shoulders of the work of civil rights leaders like A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, Rev. Martin Luther King, and Rev. William Barber who all advocated for bold poverty reduction programs.

We are proposing a jobs guarantee program to provide good jobs with living wages and benefits for anyone who wants to work and cannot find work. A city with job opportunities, living wages, and great infrastructure is one that is attractive to both newcomers and new businesses.

Our goals include the following:

- As a pilot, we seek to **create 1,000 jobs in Durham targeting the least advantaged** in our city
- **Expand productive capacity and increased disposable incomes.**
- Higher number of employed persons means a **higher number of taxpayers** and a **smaller number of persons relying on direct government assistance.**
- **Workers themselves will have a voice** in initiating and organizing the projects.





- Enhance the quality of life by providing positive personal and social benefits associated with the **dignity of work, such as increased political participation.**
- Provide **socially useful goods/services to the community.**
- Partner with NGOs, non-profits, private enterprise, philanthropist, and state and federal government to **share the cost of the program.**

Sustainable Housing

Regardless of neighborhood, race, party, or creed all Durhamites are aware that this city is facing an affordable housing crisis. When our economy is growing equitably, the need for affordable housing is greatly reduced. We need to address the affordable housing crisis by expanding programs that are already working, and imagining new, innovative solutions for the future. Here's how we do that:

- ***Provide property tax relief*** to low and medium-income homeowners to offset skyrocketing property taxes through circuit breakers, using a multiple threshold formula, which takes age, ability, and income into account.
- ***Increase funding for public housing and a dedicated housing fund.*** We have invested over \$120 million into policing in this city; we need to refocus our budgetary efforts to what the community needs most.
- ***Support and encourage public-private partnerships in affordable housing.*** Encouraging businesses who set up shop in Durham to hire local and subsidize living expenses for employees.





- **Support the Durham Community Land Trust.** Their efforts to secure affordable housing are working, we must support them.
- **Implement a tiny-house initiative,** to create more pathways for homeownership for more people.

Safe and Non-threatening Streets

Policing and public safety are not the same thing. The city alone cannot solve this problem. However, the city, and I as Mayor, can lead by building on the work of the community groups who have been at this work for a long time, such as SpiritHouse and Southerners on New Ground, and others.

- **Help end money bail.** Money bail criminalizes poverty by condemning low-income, low-level offenders to systemic discrimination and has devastating consequences for those accused of crimes and for their families. The city cannot solve this problem alone. Just as it was done with the Misdemeanor Diversion Program, the city, and I as Mayor, can lead by bringing together necessary stakeholders, such as local judges, the Sheriff's Office, Durham Police Department PD, community groups with expertise, and community members.
- **Expand the Misdemeanor Diversion Program.** The MDP works for the few hundred youth who can access it. We can open the doors even wider by: 1) eliminating the age limit of 21, and 2) working with local law enforcement to ensure officers refer as many people as possible.





- ***Moving to non-violent policing.*** We must ensure that police do not exacerbate the harm and trauma which many communities in Durham already experience. This can be done through ongoing education, ongoing investments in racial equity training for all officers, de-escalation training, and training in trauma-informed care.
- ***Investing in clean slate clinics.*** Durham's own Umar Muhammad was leading the way in community-based clean slate clinics to help clear up old records so people could get jobs. Wake County invests its own public dollars to pay for such clinics. Senator McKissick passed a bill this session to reduce the waiting time for expungement eligibility. We should follow their lead. Such an investment is critical for the economic growth of our city.
- ***Make Durham a sanctuary city*** that is safe from discrimination based on gender identification and sexual orientation, as well as standing up against oppressive policies by the state and federal government which threaten to pull apart our immigrant and refugee communities.





Future City

Durham has a spirit of innovation and evolution, turning struggle into art and tobacco into tech. We are the 3rd most educated city in the country with a median age of 32. Let's harness our talents for sustainable and equitable growth. This is Durham's destiny. This is our purpose. Let's be an example of what the 21st century can be.

- **Co-ops.** Community-powered initiatives that explore worker-owned cooperatives, such as Cooperation Durham should be supported. The city should look at how the resources made available through its Office of Workforce and Economic Development can support the incubation and development of co-ops, particularly ones that could be linked to our city's anchor institutions—city government, hospitals, and institutions of higher education (NCCU, Duke, and Durham Tech). These institutions spend millions of dollars annually and these purchases could be used to support local worker-owned cooperatives.
- **Entrepreneurship.** Durham is a vibrant entrepreneurial hub. I have worked extensively with American Underground - a robust incubator of entrepreneurship - to create learning opportunities and internships for local youth through Blackspace and Beat Making Lab. Durham is full of innovators looking for opportunities to develop their ideas. I will continue to support existing and burgeoning entrepreneurs as Mayor by working to decentralize entrepreneurial spaces and set up hubs in locations adjacent to affordable housing complexes.
- **Diversity.** We need to do a better job recruiting a variety of employers, including manufacturers, into our job market. Job quality is enhanced by job diversity. Though the tech sector has grown in recent years, many mid-wage and goods-producing jobs have declined. We need to think beyond tech and towards creating infrastructure to provide living wage jobs that supplement the growth we've experienced.





- **Arts.** We need to invest our resources in supporting the arts. Arts-entrepreneurs helped create the “Durty” Durham culture that is so attractive and cool. We can pay it forward by investing in creative public spaces, local festivals, arts education and artists to build on this foundation.
- **Green.** Our Jobs for All program would include an emphasis on green jobs, prioritizing 21st century infrastructure, green energy transition and making Durham a carbon-neutral city, from our public transit, to our city buildings and homes.

