



THE 519 E. MAIN & LIBERTY STREET NEWSLETTER

May 2026



Durham Choice Supports Local Businesses

Durham Choice and **The National Institute for Minority Economic Development** launched the Business Retention & Recruitment Fund in October 2025. The Fund offers grants and loans to small businesses located in the Durham Choice geographic footprint with the goal of fueling economic opportunity and preserving neighborhood character. Funds are available to support existing businesses as well as businesses seeking to locate in the Durham Choice target area.

The response from the business community has been fantastic. In its first six months, the Fund has approved almost \$700,000 in applications from ten businesses, and applications are still rolling in. Successful applicants are using funds for a variety of purposes, including refreshing facades and installing new signage, building out interior spaces, and buying new equipment for their businesses. Funding recipients include both existing favorites and exciting newcomers such as:



About the Business Recruitment & Retention Fund

To qualify, a business must be located within the Durham Choice target area and meet all program requirements. Funding options include:

- **Grants up to \$25,000** for facade improvements, storefront upgrades, signage or interior improvements
- **Low -Interest loans up to \$500,000** for property acquisition, leasehold improvements, working capital or inventory and equipment

For more information, email ICAPTA@theinstitutenc.org or to apply go to: <https://theinstitutenc.org/icap>

Getting Ready for Summer 2026

With summer right around the corner, it's time to think about plans for the kids. Once again, Durham Choice residents are eligible for financial assistance to cover the cost of summer camp tuition and fees for their children. Parents can enroll their kids in camps offered by a range of organizations across Durham. In addition, young residents are eligible to participate in two summer camps organized by DHA and Durham Choice:

- Artefact (June 22–July 3, 2026) – Visual and performing arts camp for kids of all ages. Camp runs from 9 am – 1 pm and transportation and lunch are provided.
- Drone Camp (July 13–17, 2026) – Learn how to build rockets and fly drones! For youth ages 13–18.

Want to Enroll Your Child in Summer Camp?

To learn more about summer camp opportunities or to request financial support to cover camp costs, contact Janasia Arrington, Durham Choice Education Specialist, at (910) 891-9392 or janasia.arrington@usi-inc.org.

Resident Spotlight: JaMarius Moore

Graduation season is approaching and JaMarius Moore is ready. A senior at Hillside High School, JaMarius is a good student and an active member of the Gaming and Design program and the AVID college and career readiness program. In his free time, JaMarius enjoys watching sports – especially the Dallas Cowboys – as well as hanging out with his girlfriend and friends and spending time with his family, including mom, Evelyn Howell, and sister Navaeh.

JaMarius credits his determination to succeed for motivating him through high school and preparing him for the next phase of his education. He has big plans for future. He is planning to attend Durham Tech to pursue a career in the trades. He's interested in welding, because, as he says, "You get to put things together using cool equipment." He also knows that welding is a high demand occupation with a range of opportunities in manufacturing, construction and industries like aerospace and oil and gas. His long term goal is to be able to purchase his own home.



On June 13, JaMarius will walk across the stage wearing Hillside blue, ready to step into an exciting future.

New Housing Nears Completion!

A core part of Durham Choice is the construction of 538 mixed-income apartments on site to replace 214 aging public housing units that have been demolished. The 72-unit Vanguard Apartments was completed in 2025 and is fully leased. Two more housing phases representing over 200 brand new, mixed-income units will come online in the next six months.

Leasing has already begun for the first phase of Stride (formerly called Dillard Street), a 48-unit mixed income development made up of four residential buildings and a community center that will serve the entire site. One building is ready for occupancy and the remaining buildings will be delivered over the summer and early fall. Coming hard on the heels of Stride will be Converge (formerly Commerce Street), which includes an 88-unit senior building and an 84-unit family building. Leasing will begin shortly for Converge Senior Living, and units will be available for occupancy in July. The family building is expected to be completed in October 2026.

*Right - Converge family building (senior building behind)
Below - Residential building at Stride*



What is Durham Choice?

Durham Choice is a partnership of the Durham Housing Authority (DHA) and the City of Durham, supported by a \$40 million Choice Neighborhoods Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The program is focused on the redevelopment of two aging public housing properties in downtown Durham, the former 519 E. Main and Liberty Street Apartments, into a single, vibrant, mixed-income community. For more information, visit www.durhamchoice.org.



ASCEND Supports Resident Success!

ASCEND is a unique six-week resident-focused training designed to empower community members to successfully transition to new, privately managed housing. Topics addressed include tenant's rights and responsibilities, financial management, connecting with community supports and preparing for emergencies. To

date, three cohorts of residents have completed the training and another is underway.

Durham Choice launched ASCEND in 2025 and we're already seeing the impact! Several members of our first cohort moved back to the Durham Choice site last fall. Residents who completed the ASCEND training have

navigated the move back more successfully than residents who did not.

In the coming months, Durham Choice will be rolling out online training to complement the in person training. *For more information about ASCEND, contact Eric Smith, Durham Choice People Lead, at esmith@dha-nc.org.*

Job Fair 2026

Durham Choice hosted its first annual Career & Resource in March. The goal of this event was to connect residents with employment resources and opportunities. We're excited that almost 50 residents attended along with over 20 employers and resource organizations! Many thanks to everyone who helped make this event a success.

Thank you to our 2026 Employer & Community Partners!

Blythe Construction, Colmar Contracting, Compass Group, Davie Construction, Dress for Success, Duke University, Durham County Dept. of Health, Durham Public Schools, Durham Tech, Families and Communities Rising, Kramden Institute, NC Works, Self-Help Credit Union, StaffZone, StepUp Durham, TRIO Education Opportunity Center, United Bank, You Can Vote



Holiday Party 2025



The food was delicious, the music was great and the mood festive at the holiday celebration in December 2025. Durham Choice staff, community members and partners came together to celebrate the year's accomplishments.

The highlight of the event was the distribution of "angel" gifts for kids. DHA staff and board, people partner Urban Strategies, Choice Neighborhood partners, local churches, and community members rallied to ensure that every young person involved in the Durham Choice program received gifts from their holiday wish lists.

Residents also had an opportunity to view and vote on proposed amenities that will be part of the park to be built at the center of the redeveloped Durham Choice site.