creating the
CAMPUS OF HOPE
FOR BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

HOUSING AUTHORITY BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. The Challenges/Statistics  
2. Building the Campus of Hope  
3. The Early Partners  
4. Additional Partnerships  
5. Program Evaluation/Next Steps  
6. Appendix of Supporting Documents
It only takes a quick drive through Birmingham’s Gate City Neighborhood to see the problems that have tarnished the area and dampened the hopes of the thousands who call it home. Boarded-up houses, darkened storefronts and gutted buildings dominate the landscape. The surrounding neighborhood lacks quality commercial development, and mini-fields where homes once stood dot the roadside. The Marks Village, public housing of 500 units, also shows clear signs of age, and quality greenspace is a rare site.

Yet, there is life just around the corner at the Marks Village Community Center each afternoon as children play in a restored gymnasium downstairs and others receive after-school help upstairs in the computer lab. Public housing community centers for decades have been safe-haven for residents, particularly the youth.

The Statistics: Economic, Educational and Criminal:
The need for the Campus of Hope initiative is clear. The HABD is home to 14 public housing developments with approximately 5,000 public housing units and 5,000 Assisted Housing properties. Together, the HABD portfolio serves about 30,000 Birmingham residents. At 97 percent, the majority of youth are living in single-parent households mostly headed by women without father figures. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the City of Birmingham has a poverty rate of 31 percent, nearly double the state of Alabama’s 19.3 percent average.

The city’s poverty rate is directly related to the earning ability of residents. For example, the per capita income in the city of Birmingham is $19,640. When compared to the state’s per capita income of $23,936, Birmingham residents earn $4,296 less per year.

The Campus of Hope, while based at Marks Village, will also service residents of nearby Tom Brown Village, Harris Homes and Morton Simpson Village. Together, more than 3,300 HABD residents live within the four community service areas.

Additionally, the center will be open to the nearby residents who do not reside in public housing. At Marks Village, 37 percent of the 507 adult residents are employed. Employment of the 272 adults at Tom Brown Village is at 33 percent. Employment of Morton Simpson Village’s 486 adult residents is 38 percent. Harris Homes residents have a 45 percent employment rate among its 235 adults.

The cycle of poverty and financial dependency is positioned to continue unless children are given the tools needed to reach higher educational benchmarks that prepare them for better job opportunities. This path is difficult. Fourteen schools from the Birmingham City School system are classified as “failing,” according to a recent report by the Alabama State Department of Education. School administrators and teachers are dedicated civil servants, but clearly need more to overcome educational deficits.

The issue of crime remains a concern in most of the areas to be served by the Campus of Hope. From 2015 to late 2017, Morton Simpson Village endured the most deadly violence with eight murders, 122 aggravated assaults, 38 burglaries, six robberies, and 77 reports of theft of property. Similarly, Marks Village reported five murders, 161 incidents of aggravated assault, 72 burglaries, 16 robberies and 102 thefts. Tom Brown Village reported three murders, 90 incidents of aggravated assault, 30 burglaries, eight robberies, and 58 thefts. Harris Homes during the same period remains the least affected by crime of the four targeted public housing sites. Since 2015, Harris Homes reported five aggravated assaults, eight burglaries, two robberies, and eight thefts.
Even with the challenges, there is hope around the corner. The Housing Authority of the Birmingham District will introduce a one-stop social service center for residents, an initiative that he has successfully introduced in other locations. Hope is returning to Marks Village and the surrounding Gate City Neighborhood with the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District’s “Campus of Hope” initiative. The new Campus of Hope will transform the traditional community center into an opportunity center -- a hub of social service and opportunity agencies in one location. It is here where individuals and families will have the opportunity to access resources designed to put them on a path of financial and social awareness, and self-sufficiency.

Each partnering agency has been specially selected for its record of success in a specific category: Economic Empowerment, Educational Advancement, Health and Wellness and Character and Leadership. These four pillars will guide programming and partnerships at the center.

“We intend to break the cycle of generational poverty and generational public housing as we know it,” said HABD President/CEO Michael Lundy. “It’s a huge responsibility and a huge obligation, and we don’t take that lightly.” Every element of the Campus of Hope is designed to support the mandate of moving residents to self-sufficiency and realizing the value of self-determination. The transformation of individuals and families are just as important as ongoing work to enhance and expand brick and mortar facilities.

The Campus of Hope plan is endorsed by the City of Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin and Councilmembers Darryl O’Quinn and William Parker, who represent the planned service area. HABD’s initiative fully aligns with Mayor Woodfin’s recently declared “Opportunity Agenda” to fully leverage City Hall’s resources to elevate the city’s most vulnerable residents. According to Woodfin, more than $1 billion was invested in Birmingham’s regional economy in 2015, yet that prosperity remains invisible in many of the city’s struggling neighborhoods. Part of his remedy includes creating neighborhood “opportunity centers.”

Mirroring the Campus of Hope, Mayor Woodfin’s plan includes developing partnerships with area workforce development providers and adult education providers among others to bring resources that will connect Birmingham residents to job training, adult education and local employment opportunities.

On-site FSS Service: HABD itself is committed to this endeavor, and will house space for its own Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) social workers at the site. FSS social workers are already active throughout public housing and assisted housing in Birmingham. The location of a physical office at the Campus of Hope will serve to enhance ongoing efforts at the Marks Village location. The success of the Campus of Hope will become a model for expansion throughout HABD’s portfolio.
THE EARLY PARTNERS

Each participating partnering agency was chosen for its proven successes in challenged communities in its specific specialty. HABD has secured agreements and memoranda of understanding from the U.S. Army, Birmingham City Schools, The University of Alabama at Birmingham’s Minority Health & Health Disparities Research Center, Lawson State Community College and The Dannon Project.

**The U.S. Army:** The Army will provide on-site recruiters twice a month to interact with residents and illustrate the benefits of professional military service. Recruiters will also aid resident youth in completing pre-assessment verbal and math skills. Additionally, recruiters will be available to interview and pre-qualify applicants. Depending on the response from the community, the Army has also agreed to hold monthly informational briefs with middle and high school students regarding general qualifications needed to pursue careers in the armed forces.

**Birmingham City Schools:** Birmingham City Schools will partner with HABD to implement its dropout recovery program at the Campus of Hope. The school system has committed to providing assistance to all students and their families in an effort to remove academic barriers to learning. Birmingham City Schools will also offer students the opportunity to learn important skills that help them understand the importance of education through the support of student programs. Web-based and one-on-one programs will provide students with resources, opportunities and outreach.

**University of Alabama at Birmingham:** The UAB Minority Health & Health Disparities Research Center generates and disseminates research knowledge from biomedical, behavioral, and social sciences in order to reduce the health disparities experienced by vulnerable populations and disadvantaged communities locally, regionally, and nationally. The Center was established in 2002, and since then has maintained its status as a University-Wide Interdisciplinary Research Center, as well as a Center of Excellence funded by the National Institutes of Health. The MHRC supports three programs - Research, Training, and Outreach - that align with the University’s broad strategic goals and make it an enabling platform for UAB’s research, teaching, and service missions. This UAB agency already has a successful longstanding relationship with HABD through activity at the Morton Simpson Village public housing location.

**Lawson State Community College:** Lawson State Community College, based in Birmingham, has a longstanding partnership with HABD through an existing GED program at two locations. The creation of the Campus of Hope presents an opportunity for even greater collaboration. A ‘diamond in the rough’ sits on top floor of the Marks Village Community Center, where an equipped industrial kitchen will be transformed into a culinary classroom. Lawson State’s Culinary Arts program will provide students with extensive training and development of skills to become competent in the field of Culinary Arts, food preparation and service. Courses offered by the college will equip residents with skills which could increase their employment options in a growing hospitality industry.

**The Dannon Project** aims to restore lives by providing supportive assistance including short-term training and certifications, job preparation and placement to youth, unemployed, underemployed, and re-entry services to previously incarcerated persons. This Birmingham-based agency was recognized by the White House as a national model for its effectiveness. The agency’s goal of effective prison re-entry services and ending the cycle of recidivism comports with the HABD goals of providing and promoting resources that help residents reach a path of social independence and economic self-sufficiency.
Maranathan Academy, a private not-for-profit school where students are offered a second chance at academic success. Maranathan Academy’s curriculum combines required academic courses necessary for the attainment of a high school diploma, with lessons on faith, self-esteem and personal responsibility. Through such programs, Maranathan Academy offers life-changing experiences for at-risk youth and adults. Some residents of Birmingham’s public housing have already found success through the program, graduating and building stable careers and strong families.

Church of the Highlands is Alabama’s largest church and ranks among the nation’s largest congregations. The church provides multiple community service opportunities to both its volunteers and full-time staffers. The congregation already has a strong presence at its healthcare and service center just a few miles from Marks Village. In addition, the church has a regular presence at Marks Village through volunteer services at the site. The Campus of Hope will expand that footprint by offering a physical location to facilitate and expand the ongoing service at the location.

Aletheia House is a community-based organization that since 1972 has provided substance abuse treatment and prevention services to low-income individuals and the communities in which they live. It is one of Alabama’s largest providers of substance abuse treatment, substance abuse/HIV prevention, employment services and affordable housing. The agency’s mission is to empower individuals, and the communities in which they live, with the skills and services they need to be responsible for their own well-being. These goals mirror HABD’s desire to lead residents to self-sufficiency.

A Shared Community Resource: The center will not only serve the Marks Village and nearby public housing sites, but will also remain open to neighbors in non-housing communities. Issues of unemployment, underemployment and public safety do not begin nor end at the gates of public housing, but are shared challenges of the entire community. HABD has worked to build strong relationships between the agency, public housing residents and the residents in the surrounding neighborhood. The Campus of Hope and the variety of services within its walls will exist as an amenity to support the entire neighborhood and its joint residents.
HABD is committed to tracking the success of the Campus of Hope by using empirical data from a reputable third-party. HABD understands that tracking and reporting data on program participants is essential. HABD will partner with the University of Alabama at Birmingham to provide research on the agency’s activities and track its progress.

HABD will have the ability to collect data measuring performance, such as inputs, outputs and outcomes. This will allow us to have real-time, web-based solutions. Specifically, we will be tracking and monitoring the following performance measures to include the number of program participants served by type of activity.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham has the capacity to capture data which includes case management of public housing residents, assisting them with achieving economic self-sufficiency by assessing their strengths, identifying the barriers, structured goal setting, and evaluating achievement. HABD has created an effective outreach and engagement program that will identify and engage the target program participants we plan to assist in the Campus of Hope program.

HABD has also entered into a data sharing Memorandum of Understanding with Birmingham City Schools for the program. This formalized data sharing agreement reflects the intention of the Birmingham City Schools and HABD to share information about the participants.

Next Steps:
The Campus of Hope will begin offering services in March. Logistical planning is already underway. HABD crews will upgrade the current community center, adding landscaping, exterior improvements, additional room space, and security enhancements to meet the needs for expanded and more diverse use.

HABD is also working to coordinate with core agencies as well as other early committed partners to schedule beginning dates and times to begin service.
Attached please find supporting documents:

HUD EnVision Center Demonstration Commitment Letters from Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin and HABD signed by:
• The U.S. Army
• The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Center of Minority Health & Health Disparities Research Center
• Lawson State Community College
• Birmingham City Schools
• The Dannon Project

• Memorandum of Understanding between HABD and The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Center of Minority Health & Disparities Research Center

• Memorandum of Understanding between HABD and Lawson State Community College

• Memorandum of Understanding between HABD and Birmingham City Schools

• Memorandum of Understanding between HABD and The Dannon Project

• Memorandum of Understanding between HABD and Maranathan Academy

• Letter of support from Birmingham City Councilman Darrell O’Quinn

• Letter of support from Birmingham City Councilman William Parker