



Greater Austin Area Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Hispanic Austin Leadership 2018-2019
Finance Team



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H.O.L.A Project Scope

In October 2018, the HAL Finance Team formed *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) and quickly formed a relationship with Blackshear Bridge, an emerging non-profit organization focused on AISD's historic, central east Austin Blackshear Elementary School and the Blackshear-Prospect Hill Neighborhood surrounding it. After gathering data and researching the systemic and institutional barriers that community members contend with, in November 2018 *H.O.L.A!* entered an agreement to collaborate with Blackshear Bridge in their efforts to address financial, educational, and cultural sustainability in the neighborhood.

Data from the Community Health Assessment for Austin/Travis County (2017) indicates that income in Travis County is inequitably distributed between households by race and ethnicity. One of the communities in Travis County impacted by these disparities is the Blackshear-Prospect Hill Community, located east of I-35 and south of Martin Luther King Blvd. In addition to income inequities, the Blackshear Community also faces challenges of advanced gentrification and educational vulnerability. Organizing in solidarity, entities such as Blackshear Bridge, Huston-Tillotson University, and other neighborhood associations intend to address these disparities. *H.O.L.A!* is designed to specifically provide support to these efforts as identified through quantitative and qualitative data and research.

Through this collaboration, the HAL Finance team and Blackshear Bridge set a goal to deliver a toolkit to be implemented by Blackshear Bridge, effective 2019. The deliverables are designed to address and impact some of the needs of the Blackshear community, including the creation of a sustainable recurring fundraiser for the organization, brochure, website page, and oral history videos to increase accessibility, awareness, and community engagement related to economic sustainability.

In November, the HAL Finance Team began designing and developing a community assessment tool to identify the specific financial needs of the Blackshear community, including residents from Rosewood Courts, a historic public housing complex in the area. December and January included the creation of a resource to meet these needs to be reviewed and modified as needed by February. The team also planned a fundraiser and a fundraising campaign with Blackshear Bridge. Additionally, the HAL Finance Team partnered with Foundation Communities to offer residents of the Blackshear community the opportunity to attend Money Management classes, a three-part series that covers credit, debt reduction, and savings in depth. Final deployment occurred throughout the months of March and April of 2019.

Overall, the HAL Finance Team developed and offered a financial resource to one of the many communities of color in need in the central Austin region. This resource was ultimately created in collaboration with Blackshear Bridge, with the intention of it being sustained and maintained by this organization post-graduation from the Hispanic Austin Leadership program.



Executive Summary

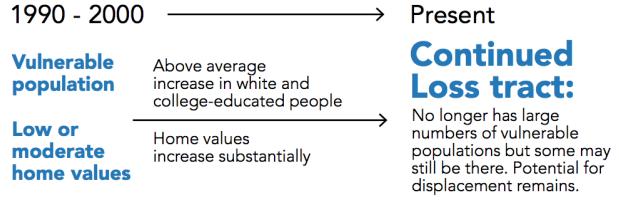
The Community Health Assessment for Austin/Travis County (2017) indicates that income in Travis County is inequitably distributed, specifically impacting households of historically marginalized backgrounds. Recently, *Uprooted: Residential Displacement in Austin's Gentrifying Neighborhoods and What Can Be Done About It* (2018), a study by the University of Texas at Austin, further analyzed these inequities and highlighted which communities are affected, specifically by gentrification. For those not familiar with this term, the Urban Displacement Project, a research and action initiative of UC Berkeley, defines gentrification as:

"A process of neighborhood change that includes economic change in a historically disinvested neighborhood —by means of real estate investment and new higher-income residents moving in — as well as demographic change — not only in terms of income level, but also in terms of changes in the education level and/or racial make-up of residents, often resulting in displacement of earlier residents."

For the purposes of our project, we decided to utilize existing literature and publications that not only focus on the impact and causes of gentrification, but specifically on this phenomenon in Travis County and the displacement of working class residents. The HAL Finance Team strives to create and sustain our project *H.O.L.A!* due to the work that emerged from The University of Texas at Austin and the population of Latinx and other people of color that it is affecting. Our work is research-based and research-informed through publications, community asset-mapping, community needs assessment, and community voice.

Why

Gentrification negatively affects people of color in East Austin. *Uprooted* (2018) emerged to shed light on where and why economic inequities are occurring, to what degree this is happening and which population of residents it is happening to. Case studies are provided on how to mitigate displacement caused by gentrification, as well as policy strategies to help address the needs of the vulnerable residents of the communities being gentrified (*Uprooted*, 2018). It is important to highlight that although this is a recent and prevalent study, community members and those impacted have been aware of the phenomenon of gentrification for decades. Moreover, these trends show only nominal signs of hope for the communities being displaced and there is a demonstrated need for support and resources.



Uprooted (2018)

Who

One of the communities in Travis County impacted by these disparities is the Blackshear Community, located on the east side of Austin, east of I-35 and south of Martin Luther King Blvd as shown below.



Through our cultural asset-mapping, we see that this community is home to Huston-Tillotson University, local business owners, lifelong residents, and community partners such as Blackshear Bridge. All of these community assets and individuals have been fighting the forces of gentrification that is destroying and removing the historical and cultural community assets and people that have called the Blackshear community home for decades.

In choosing a location, the HAL Finance Team focused on the Blackshear community, due to it being ranked high on the “Gentrifying Neighborhoods Scale” depicted in the *Uprooted* (2018) study and shown below. It was determined that Blackshear community is rated a category 5 on the scale, which is why we believe it is imperative to support this community so that its members not only maintain their livelihood, but do it in a manner that is affordable and equitable to others residing in Austin.

5 categories of Gentrifying Neighborhoods





Uprooted (2018)

How

The HAL Finance Team intends to address the issue of financial affordability and gentrification through the proposed timeline. Our action plan depicts the ultimate execution and sustainable deliverable of mass implementation of the *H.O.L.A!* resource to underserved communities in Austin that are being faced with similar challenges, such as Blackshear Bridge.



Project Timeline

The HAL Finance Team brainstormed, created, delivered and refined the proposed concept of *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) in the span of 8 months. The following timeline demonstrates the Milestones and Task that we divided per month, with the goal of developing a sustainable deliverable that can serve communities impacted by gentrification and financial instability in the Austin Metropolitan Area. This timeline is an overall monthly summary, with individual 2-hour weekly meetings that encompassed event planning, team strategizing, community organizing, development and refinement of final deliverables for and execution of *H.O.L.A!*

Timeline	Milestone	Tasks
October 2018	#1: Project Team Roles and Routines	Establish roles on the team
	Begin #2: Conduct Community Needs Assessment	Conduct research on assigned subject area
		Identify community leaders and schedule meetings where appropriate
		Meet with community leaders to gain perspectives on issues
		Narrow focus to the critical issues and unmet community needs
November 2018	Complete #2: Conduct Community Needs Assessment	
	Begin #3: Project Selection	Determine which need we'll address & brainstorm project ideas
		Socialize project ideas with mentor, alumni and other leaders
December 2019	Complete #3: Project Selection	Finalize project selection and ensure it meets necessary criteria
	Begin #4: Project Implementation	Identify resources & partnerships that will be needed to implement project
		Prepare information that will be needed to share with potential partners and/or donors
		Plan for / begin fundraising



		Plan for / begin outreach efforts
		Determine how will we document / measure our progress
January 2019	Continue #4: Project Implementation	
February 2019	Continue #4: Project Implementation	
March 2019	Complete #4: Project Implementation	All project implementation tasks complete
	Begin #5: Recap and Share Project Activities	Develop project binder and community presentation
April 2019	Complete #5: Recap and Share Project Activities	Late April - Turn in final project binder and fundraising reimbursement sheet
Final Project Deadline		Early May - Conduct mock presentation with HAL Council
		Early May - Review binder feedback and make necessary edits
May 2019	HAL Graduation and Final 8 Minute Presentation	Early May – Present final project presentation and binder



Action Plan

The *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) Finance Team has a three-pillar action plan to help those residing in the Blackshear community who are being affected by gentrification and displacement. Our action plan to address financial instability, just one of the factors identified in *Uprooted (2018)*, is the following:



3 Pillars of H.O.L.A!

Fundraise

First, the *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) Finance Team will organize a community event to:

- 1) Engage Blackshear residents and community leaders.
- 2) Provide a platform for donations.
- 3) Create awareness for the need of preservation of cultural and community assets.
- 4) The resulting funds raised will be used to develop and support Blackshear Bridge initiatives including H.O.L.A!

Educate

Second, the *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) Finance Team will invite Blackshear community members to sign up for Foundation Communities Money Management course. The goal of this course will be to:

- 1) Enhance financial literacy and provide certification.
- 2) Encourage informed community members and leaders to share such information and recruit others to attend the reoccurring educational course.
- 3) Empower members of the community to attend spaces where community voice is needed to affect and change policy that supports gentrification and displacement

Inform

Third, the *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) Finance Team will develop and deliver a resource guide with the goal to:

- 1) Inform all members affected by financial stability in the Blackshear community.
- 2) Reach those who are not able to attend the Foundation Communities Money Management course (elders, youth, working class, etc.)
- 3) Provide a quick and easy tool to use in case of a finance crisis affecting livelihood.



Execution



Fundraise

On February 10th, The HAL Finance Team executed the first pillar of *H.O.L.A! (Helping Others Live Financially)*: “Love Your Neighbor Benefit & Silent Auction with Ex Romantika” in collaboration with Blackshear Bridge.

The afternoon event invited community organizers, leaders, and supporters of the Blackshear community with the goal of fundraising for HAL’s *H.O.L.A!* initiative among other initiatives of Blackshear Bridge at the Tamale House located in East Austin.

Highlights for our fundraising event included the presence and support of Representative Lloyd Doggett, City of Austin District 1 City Council Member Natasha Harper-Madison, Travis County Voter Registrar Bruce Elfant, Huston-Tillotson University, Google Fiber and the City of Austin.



Members of *H.O.L.A!* with Texas Representative Lloyd Doggett

Our “Love Your Neighbor Benefit & Silent Auction with Ex Romantika” event raised over \$4,000, with funds intended to support the second and third pillars of *H.O.L.A! (Helping Others Live Affordably)*. Funds for this event were collected through entrance fees, donations, a silent auction and support from Tamale House. All of these funds were collected with proceeds going



directly to financial support strategies for economically struggling members of the Blackshear community. Additionally, this was a way for *H.O.L.A!* to reach members of the Blackshear community who would benefit from attending the financial stability course and community members willing to help distribute the *H.O.L.A!* Resource Guide in April.



Educate

The Second Pillar of *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) involved enhancing community members' knowledge on financial literacy. The foundation for the education component of *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) was guided by *Uprooted: Residential Displacement in Austin's Gentrifying Neighborhoods and What Can Be Done About It* (2018), a report by the University of Texas that provides a framework to help identify the communities in Austin that are currently being affected by gentrification and economic hardships associated with displacement. Many community members are affected by gentrification and are socially vulnerable to threats towards their livelihoods, security, political, social, and economic networks, and other forces that are displacing individuals from their homes (Uprooted, 2018). The purpose of these courses, in partnership with Foundation Communities, was to support low-income people of color, oftentimes families with children in poverty, by providing educational resources to combat the shock of displacement in their community and prevent this from happening to their own household.

Who is most vulnerable to displacement?



Communities of Color



People 25 and older without a Bachelor's Degree



Renters



People making at or below 80% Median Family Income



Households with children in poverty

Uprooted (2018)



The team utilized information derived from *Uprooted* (2018) and took action with purposeful engagement with members of the Blackshear community that shared similar indicators, such as income, race and ethnicity, education, household composition, and housing status, shown below:

Vulnerability Factors

**People of color**

Percent of residents who identify as anything other than "non-Hispanic white alone."

**Renters**

Percent of households who rent, rather than own, their homes.

**Lack of higher education**

Percent of residents aged 25 or greater lacking a four-year bachelor's degree or higher.

**Children in poverty**

Share of children who live in households that lie below the official federal poverty line.

**Low income**

Percent of households with incomes below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for households of the same size within the MSA.

Uprooted (2018)

Participants of the Money Management course presented by Foundation Communities were individuals who demonstrated the need for financial educational support. This course provided information on the topics of budgeting, credit, debt reduction and savings. Participants received one-on-one financial coaching or a credit counseling session with a free credit report and a certificate of completion.



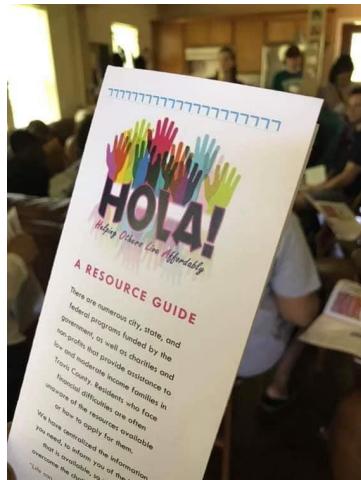
Participants of the Money Management Course learning strategies to achieve financial stability



Inform

The third pillar of *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) served to inform and positively impact and support members of historically marginalized communities in Austin.

The strategy to inform communities was the creation of the “*H.O.L.A!* Resource Guide,” a tool to provide quick and accessible information for families and individuals. Resources include multi-resource centers, assistance from local nonprofits, as well as food, transportation, utilities, health, and housing resources for residents of the Travis County Area.



“*H.O.L.A!* Resource Guide” at the pre-distribution gathering

“*H.O.L.A!* Resource Guide” was piloted and canvassers distributed 500 brochures in the Blackshear community. The distribution of our resource guide was with the support of Blackshear Bridge, Huston-Tillotson University, and other members of the Blackshear Community. It is important to highlight that participants of the distribution of the “*H.O.L.A!* Resource Guide” were all paid a livable wage of \$15 an hour for their time.

The *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) Finance Team believes that this is a resource that can be implemented in all of the communities that are being affected by gentrification and displacement in Austin that are highlighted in *Uprooted* (2018).



Analysis of Results

The following are the results of the entire *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) program since its inception and deployment. These results show the effectiveness of all 3 pillars of the project and ensure its sustainability and reproduction in other communities facing financial need in Austin.

On February 10, 2019, the “Love Your Neighborhood Fundraiser” raised a total of \$4,000 through a silent auction, donations, entrance fees, and support for Tamale House East.



“Love Your Neighbor Fundraiser” Silent Auction

Money Management Courses

Another success was of our community participation in the free Money Management courses offered by Foundation Communities. *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) managed to enroll 14 participants with 5 finishing the courses and obtaining certificates in the spring 2019 session. Participants learned about different strategies to help survive the economic crisis that is occurring in different regions in Austin. This rigorous course included three weekly sessions. We hope that this course continues to be offered by Foundation Communities, as it was received favorably and fruitfully by the Blackshear participants.



Members of *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) with class alumni



“H.O.L.A! Resource Guide” Distribution

On Saturday, April 20, 2019, Blackshear Bridge contracted with 15 young people at a living wage of \$15 an hour, pictured on the right at the pre-distribution gathering to distribute the “H.O.L.A! Resource Guide.” They were mostly Huston-Tillotson University students, committed to the community that surrounds and empowers their campus.

The paid canvassers distributed approximately 500 H.O.L.A! resource brochures to residents and others in the Blackshear Prospect Hill Neighborhood and at PreSERVING East Austin, a community forum put on by students at Huston-Tillotson University on Monday, April 22, 2019. These received so much positive feedback from neighbors who live in Rosewood Courts, Salina Apartments and homes all over the neighborhood.



Elders, youth, and people in-between said, "This is just what I need. Thank you so much."

Facebook

For many individuals residing in the community, social media serves as a source of information, platform for communication and media outlet for many events occurring in the community.

Since the commencement of the partnership between Blackshear Bridge and *H.O.L.A! (Helping Others Live Affordably)*, the Blackshear Bridge Facebook account grew from increased social media presence by 60%, Post/page reach increased by 393%, and individual post engagements had an increased activity of 494%. This result was significant, as it helped with the organization of the “Love Your Neighborhood Fundraiser,” the recruitment for Blackshear participants to the Money Management courses, and distribution of the “H.O.L.A! Resource Guide”.



Blackshear Bridge Facebook Page



Future of H.O.L.A!

The Future

The future of *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) seems bright! In the nearest future, we plan to re-print and distribute an additional 100-200 brochures at a Property Tax Town Hall hosted by Austin Revitalization Authority, City of Austin and other partners on May 4, 2019 from 1-3pm at Connelly-Guerrero Senior Activity Center.

We are currently working on the sustainability of *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*) past May 2019. Blackshear Bridge, our initial partner, is looking to continue the efforts of the HAL Finance Team.

Furthermore, we are currently seeking communities, non-profits, and other organizations in Austin and the Central Texas region who wish to support this initiative and adopt it for its expansion.



H.O.L.A! Finance Team 2018-2019

(L to R: Back Row) Matt Flores, Kaitlyn Cosenza, Rodrigo Aguayo and Shelly Cruz

(L to R: Front Row) Amanda Jasso and Sylvia Butanda



H.O.L.A! YTD Project Budget

Account Title	Actual
Seed Money	\$250
In-Kind Promotional Materials	\$250
Promotional	\$85
Supplies	\$50
Total	\$635



H.O.L.A! Program Sponsorship

Objective

We are participants of the Hispanic Austin Leadership (HAL) Program that is part of the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The HAL participants are grouped into five different teams that create a community impact project for the Greater Austin area, and our team is specifically addressing financial stability through partnership with neighborhood organizations and community members.

Together, our HAL Finance team collectively brings over 20 years of experience in program management, community engagement, and financial services. In collaboration with Central East Austin organizations, we would like to introduce our program, *H.O.L.A!* (*Helping Others Live Affordably*). Our program will:

- Establish community relationships and solicit community feedback on the needs and barriers to affordable housing in the Blackshear-Prospect Hill neighborhood
- Deliver a financial equity toolkit to make financial stability resources more accessible
- Offer residents FREE financial skills workshops covering topics like property taxes, home tax exemptions, and home repair programs
- Partner with Blackshear Bridge, an organization dedicated to creating and maintaining diverse and sustainable communities in Central East Austin, to host a fundraiser and benefit for the Blackshear community

Our financial stability program, *H.O.L.A!*, seeks to address the affordability crisis plaguing families and elders, and it is our hope that we can sustain this program long past our service in the Hispanic Austin Leadership Program. Our ability to continue to support these program participants is due in large part to the generous support of donors who believe in the importance of financial stability and the impact it has on our everyday lives. Thank you for considering our request, and we hope you join us to support Austinites fighting to survive in our rapidly changing city.

H.O.L.A! Sponsorship Opportunities

Friend \$100	Supporter \$200	Advocate \$500	Sustainer \$1000	Your call! \$ _____
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References

- *Uprooted: Residential Displacement in Austin's Gentrifying Neighborhoods and What Can Be Done About It*, University of Texas Center for Sustainable Development in the School of Architecture & the Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic in the School of Law, University of Texas, 2018.
- *Community Health Assessment for Austin/Travis County*, City of Austin Public Health, 2017.
- *Urban Displacement Project*, University of California at Berkeley, 2019.