

# Hacking Community Change





Greensboro Mutual Aid and CoMetta hosted a Community Hackathon to bring together local changemakers to co-create ways to address critical community needs. Twenty-one changemakers gathered at the East White Oak Community Center to share aspirations for Greensboro and generate potential solutions.

Here's what emerged from the conversations.



# The Hackathon

The themes that surfaced at the hackathon focused on essential needs:

## **Housing Security and Affordability**

- Ensuring everyone has access to safe, stable housing.
- Encouraging the development of more affordable housing options.
- Securing housing through community-driven solutions, not just government action.
- Addressing the needs of those outside traditional housing systems.
- Strengthening tenants' rights and protections.

## **Mutual Aid and Community Support**

- Expanding and encouraging mutual aid networks where community members exchange support and services.
- Increasing participation in mutual aid and community-building efforts.

## **Immigrant and Minority Protection**

- Protecting immigrant communities from threats such as deportation, discrimination, and lack of access to services.
- Building security culture, expanding rights education, and increasing resource access for vulnerable groups.

## **Food Security and Shared Food Spaces**

- Creating more shared, permanent spaces for shared community meals and food distribution.
- Increasing access to fresh food from local farms.
- Raising awareness and participation in community food initiatives, such as community fridges and food contributions.

## **Resource Connection and Accessibility**

- Connecting community resources to the people and places that need them most.
- Increasing the availability of affordable or free meeting spaces for community groups and activists.
- Making services and jobs more accessible without raising costs for individuals.

## **Community Safety and Well-being**

- Motivating people to step outside their comfort zones
- Enhancing feelings of safety within the community.
- Providing children with greater access to creative opportunities and public cultural experiences.
- Advancing public art, history markers, and educational tours.

## **Advocacy and Global Solidarity**

- Supporting justice and solidarity efforts, including international causes like Palestine.



# Co-Creating Solutions

Based on these inputs, we prioritized the possibilities and broke into subgroups to trace potential solutions.



Here's what was generated from those interactions.

## 1. Mutual Aid and Community Support

### *Idea:*

Build a culture of mutual aid by encouraging the exchange of time-based services such as child care, counseling, and other forms of support to reduce stigma and foster stronger community relationships.

### *Approach:*

Start with a small, experimental group to test time-based service exchanges and educate participants about successful models like time banks. Use these informal groups as a foundation for broader community engagement and cultural change.

### *Impact:*

Reduces reliance on external purchases, builds trust and relationships, and lays the groundwork for a more resilient and interconnected community.

## 2. Housing as a Fundamental Right

*Idea:*

Promote diverse, affordable, and secure housing as a basic human right, ensuring everyone has access to safe and stable living environments.

*Approach:*

Expand affordable housing and boarding houses for specific groups (e.g., veterans, single parents), support community land trusts, and promote participatory budgeting and flexible work models to address housing needs.

*Impact:*

Improves community safety and well-being, retains population diversity, and addresses health inequities associated with housing instability.

## 3. Protecting Immigrant Communities and People of Color

*Idea:*

Safeguard immigrant and minority communities from threats such as detention, deportation, hate crimes, exploitation, and systemic barriers.

*Approach:*

Expand ICE watch and rapid response, prioritize de-escalation training, increase rights education and resource distribution, use creative outreach and training formats, and encourage simple acts of community support.

*Impact:*

Enhances safety and resilience, builds trust, increases access to resources, and empowers vulnerable populations to better protect themselves and each other.

## 4. Community Food Spaces

*Idea:*

Create safe, permanent spaces for communal meals and cultural exchange to break social isolation and foster community connections.

*Approach:*

Utilize existing public spaces with kitchens and gardens, organize regular rotating events with shared cooking, music, and childcare, and encourage cultural sharing through food.

*Impact:*

Strengthens social bonds, enhances mental and spiritual health, and fosters a sense of belonging and inclusion for all community members.

## 5. Resource Connection

*Idea:*

*Centralize and streamline access to community resources, making support easily accessible to low-income, retired, and technologically underserved individuals.*

*Approach:*

Develop a unified “Brain Trust” or resource hub, distribute information through both digital and print channels, and leverage community hubs for outreach.

*Impact:*

Improves efficiency in connecting people to needed services, reduces isolation, and ensures help for those who need it most, enhancing overall community well-being.





# Next Steps

Our plan is to launch an Innovation Sprint to enhance and activate these ideas. The Spint will run through the summer and culminate in presentations to the broader community. As part of this process, we will provide participants with a set of innovation tools, methodologies, and networks to further accent their capabilities for changemaking.

We invite your input and interest in joining us to make this real and transform Greensboro into a place of greater kinship and collective thriving.

