

# FRANKIE L. ATWATER SR., MPA, HDFP

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April 1, 2025

Maria G. Marino  
Mayor  
Board of County Commissioners  
Palm Beach County  
301 N. Olive Avenue  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

## **RE: Letter of Intent – County Administrator Position**

Dear Mayor Marino and Members of the Board of Commissioners,

I am writing to express my intent to serve as the next County Administrator for Palm Beach County. With over 20 years of distinguished service in executive leadership roles within state and local government, I bring a record of success in advancing public sector performance, leading complex operations, and aligning governmental functions with the strategic priorities of elected leadership.

My career has been defined by a commitment to operational excellence, transparent governance, and responsible fiscal management. I have directed organizations with budgets exceeding \$700 million, guided cross-departmental efforts through major change initiatives, and implemented strategic plans that delivered measurable improvements in service delivery, economic development, and community outcomes. My ability to navigate politically sensitive environments, collaborate with diverse stakeholders, and deliver results with the art of relationship building, reflects the leadership needed to support and carry out the vision of Palm Beach County.

Palm Beach County is a dynamic and growing community, and I am confident that my experience, coupled with my deep commitment to public service, makes me well positioned to lead as your chief administrative officer. I welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with the Board of County Commissioners to advance the County's long-term goals and deliver meaningful results to its residents.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how I can contribute to Palm Beach County's continued success.

Sincerely,

*Frankie Atwater Sr.*

Frankie Atwater Sr., MPA, HDFP

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## EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Visionary and results-driven executive with extensive expertise in municipal leadership, community/economic development, and organizational transformation. Proven ability to lead cities and communities to achieve sustainable growth, operational excellence, and public service improvements. Recognized for cultivating strong intergovernmental and community relationships, developing innovative programs, and managing multimillion-dollar budgets to address complex challenges. A collaborative leader with a history of building high-performing teams and driving measurable results.

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## CORE COMPETENCIES

- Strategic Leadership and Visionary Planning
- Budgeting and Financial Oversight (\$700M+ Portfolio)
- Community Engagement and Intergovernmental Relations
- Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery
- Talent Development and High-Performance Team Building
- Grant Writing and Program Development
- Land Use, Redevelopment, and Urban Planning
- Stakeholder Collaboration and Consensus Building
- Data-Driven Decision Making and Operational Efficiency

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## SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- I have led innovative changes benefiting state and local governments in Illinois and Georgia, resulting in the creation and retention of over 30,000 jobs.
- Oversaw the management of over \$3 billion in state and federal funds for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).
- I've Received prestigious awards, including two National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards, for transformative programs exceeding established goals.
- Dissolved two (2) Political Action Committees (PAC), the Illinois Community Action Fund-Political Action Committee (ICAF-PAC) and the Community Action Fund-Political Action Committee (CAF-PAC).

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## EXECUTIVE PROFILE

### DEKALB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**President & CEO** (June 2021 – Present)

DeKalb County, GA

- Collaborated closely with the board of directors to establish and uphold the corporate mission, vision, and strategic trajectory.
- Accelerated growth in membership and revenue, surpassing targets by 50% and 150% (3 years) respectively.
- I implemented strategies, systems and initiatives aimed at bolstering chamber growth and enhancing member investment value.
- Cultivated partnerships with government entities and introduced programs tailored to bolstering support for small businesses.
- High visibility in DeKalb County coordinating efforts amongst school districts, elected officials and the business community to promote economic growth in DeKalb County.
- Oversaw all operational, financial, and fundraising aspects, ensuring the organization's overall success.
- Spearheaded member sales and services, program management, economic development endeavors, and public policy advocacy.
- I consistently create equitable economic opportunities through collaboration with local banks and Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFI's) to encourage business growth, catalyze job creation, and attract private investment. My efforts support existing businesses while promoting the attraction, establishment, and expansion of new enterprises.

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- Nurtured relationships with municipal, county, state, and federal governments, along with their elected representatives.
- Directly oversee program management, expand economic development initiatives, represent public policy interests, govern operations, manage finances, and lead fundraising efforts.
- Manage public relations and outreach activities to uphold a vibrant public image, bolster marketing efforts, enhance communications, and foster community relations.

## **OMDEVELOPMENT GROUP LLC.**

**PRINCIPAL** (October 2019 – June 2021)

Douglasville, GA

- Evaluate and assess risks and opportunities throughout the enterprise concerning legal compliance, fund allocation, and contract disbursements.
- Conduct analysis of trend data and market insights essential for supporting effective contract negotiations.
- Offer guidance on pertinent federal regulations and laws influencing business decisions.
- Provided consultancy services to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Fulton County, Georgia, on federal regulations governing the utilization of funds aimed at assisting low- and moderate-income individuals.
- Monitor both state and federal legislative landscapes for policy shifts and legislative backing for programs potentially impacting clients with low incomes.
- Forge close collaborations with elected officials in Fulton County to cultivate constructive relationships between the county, the state of Georgia, and the federal government.

## **ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES**

**ILLINOIS COMMUNITY ACTION DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**PRESIDENT AND CEO** (January 2019 – October 2019)

Springfield, IL

- Led a network of community action agencies to improve relationships and contracts with the State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Efforts strengthened the prospect for 31 non-profit agencies to receive a share of \$30 million in federal funding from the State of Illinois, to provide social services and energy assistance to income qualified residents.
- Successfully negotiated a new contract and performance metrics with sub-contractors working for ComED and Ameren Illinois. As a result, the Association funding to aid and oversee participating community action agencies was increased to provide necessary services. The new contract removed penalties assessed against the Association and increased unrestricted revenue.
- Negotiated contract terms with state and federal partners to bring resolution to compliance issues with an outstanding Revolving Loan Fund that was supported by federal funding for over 30 years.
- Gaged risks and opportunities across the association related to laws, funds allocation contract payments, performance or value-based payments pertaining to individual agency contracts.
- I represented the Association and Development Corporation in discussions with a local government to continue supporting Phase II of a housing tax credit project within the local government's jurisdiction. The city pledged \$300,000 in tax increment financing which catalyzed the development of 30 single family homes. Project financing layers:
  - Ameren Energy Efficiency Grants
  - Tax Credit Equity from National Equity Fund
  - Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program Funding
  - Conventional construction financing through a partnership with Midland States Bank
- I managed human capital, finances, and information resources to strategically accomplish goals identified by the Board of Directors.

**FULTON COUNTY, GEORGIA**

**DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

(July 2015 – January 2019)

Atlanta, GA

- Advanced a portfolio of federal funding to assist local governments and agencies in Fulton County.
- I directed 75 staff in overseeing the management of programmatic, financial, technical, and administrative components of all six (6) federal and state grants across all department of community development streams of service.
- I provided the interpretation of federal regulations, rules, policies, laws and procedures to staff, Fulton County executive officers, elected officials, and the public.
- Worked closely with function and technical leaders to plan for and execute enabling laws and policies while providing interpretation of federal regulations, rules, policies, laws, and procedures to staff, Fulton County executive officers, elected officials, and the public.
- I worked across different teams, functions, management levels and geographies to create support for programs within my department, while maintaining strong stakeholder engagement with internal department heads, commissioners, external associations, and non-profit groups.
- Initiated, spearheaded, and successfully launched a Youth Crime Prevention Summer Internship program aimed at providing valuable work experience to at-risk youths. This initiative facilitated job training and educational opportunities for 400 participants. As a result of the program's effectiveness in design and execution, my department was honored with a National Association of Counties Achievement Award.
- Revamped the County's framework for distributing federal funds, supported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, to municipalities and nonprofit entities. This restructuring significantly mitigated noncompliance issues, reducing reported instances by 90%.
- Provided oversight to ensure the punctual, accurate, and comprehensive submission of all requisite reports, plans, and documents mandated by federal and state regulations.
- Collaborated closely with the Fulton County Housing Authority and its Board to uphold service delivery in alignment with HUD Public Housing Policy.

**STATE OF ILLINOIS**

**ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR/ASSISTANT DEPUTY**

**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

(February 2012 – June 2015)

Springfield, IL

- I directed a team of 26 exempt and union employees, tasked with managing six federally sponsored programs through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), alongside four operational divisions.
- Administered Federal Disaster Recovery funding for the State of Illinois following Hurricane Ike, restoring critical infrastructure and supporting impacted communities.
  - Collaboration with the State of Illinois Emergency Management Agency, Office of the Illinois Attorney General, Illinois Speaker of the House, Illinois Governor's Office, Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Housing Development Authority.
- Directed the allocation of \$700 million in annual state and federal funding, resulting in the creation of 1,000 jobs, development of over 500 affordable housing units, and support for construction spanning more than thirty miles of infrastructure.
- Pioneered Illinois' inaugural loan program, leveraging \$130 million in federal funds to provide capital access to local governments and businesses, fueling housing initiatives, economic development projects, small businesses, and job creation endeavors.
- Collaborated with federal counterparts to address contentious issues affecting communities across Illinois.
- Strategized with function and technical leaders to enact enabling legislation and policies.
- Orchestrated the success of Illinois' "War on Poverty" through a network of Community Action Agencies statewide.

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- Established and maintained a unified community development agenda through dialogue with local governments, community-based organizations, financial institutions, and advocacy groups, guiding the allocation of federal resources to Illinois communities.
- Led efforts within the Office of Community Development to forge coalitions with internal and external colleagues, fostering collaborative action on critical departmental functions mandated by the Governor's Office and the Illinois General Assembly.
- Formulated policies, standard operating procedures, and monitoring mechanisms to rectify past compliance issues identified by the HUD Office of Inspector General, inquiries from the U.S. Executive Office in Washington D.C., President Obama Administration and the Illinois State Legislature.

## ADDITIONAL CAREER HISTORY

Senior Administrator, Camp, Dresser and McKee (CDMSmith), Chicago, IL (October 2010 – January 2012)  
Community Development Division Manager/Grant Manager, City of Moline, IL (February 2004- October 2010)  
Community Development Planner, City of Moline, IL (December 2000-February 2004)  
Urban Planner, City of Moline, IL (October 1998- December 2000)  
Planning Assistant Bi-State Regional Commission, Rock Island, IL (August 1995-September 1998)  
Planning Intern, City of LaGrange, GA (January 1993 – June 1993)

Chair WorkSource DeKalb, Georgia Board of Directors (July 2023-Present)  
Regional Business Coalition of Metropolitan Atlanta, Inc. Board of Directors (July 2023-Present)  
Georgia Chamber Government Affairs Council/Federal Affairs Committee (January 22-Present)  
(Volunteer Work) Project NOW Community Action Agency (Board Chair), Rock Island, IL (June 2010-January 2012)  
(Volunteer Work) Project NOW Community Action Agency (Board Member), Rock Island, IL (February 2002 - June 2010)  
(Volunteer Work) National Community Development Association (Board Member), Washington D.C. (January 2007-Nov 2010)  
(Volunteer Work) City of Rock Island Old Chicago Neighborhood Committee (Board Member), Rock Island, IL (May 2005)

## EDUCATION, TRAINING & CERTIFICATIONS

Master of Public Administration (2008)  
Drake University, Des Moines, IA  
Pi Alpha Alpha Honor Society Recognition

Bachelor of Science, Community Regional Planning (1992)  
Iowa State University, Ames, IA  
Iowa State University Academic Award  
Iowa State University Athletic Academic Award

Housing Development Finance Professional (HDFP)  
Economic Development Finance Professional (EDFP) enrolled  
Executive Leadership Certificate, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia  
Previous-International City and County Management Association Membership

## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Two (2) National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards, 2018  
Governor of Illinois Award for Leadership and Excellence in Service, 2012  
National Community Development Association Community Development Award  
Rock Island, Illinois High School Distinguished Alumnus  
Three -Time Division I National Collegiate Athletic Association All-American Track & Field Award  
Former NCAA Division I Record Holder  
USA Track & Field World Championship Team Gold Medalist  
Olympic Track & Field Trials Semifinalist