



## **Emancipation Economic Development Council Announces Major State Recognition, New Leadership and Funding for Community Initiatives**

*Third Ward non-profit recognized as an official Texas Main Street City; welcomes first executive director and deputy manager; and receives support from the Kinder Foundation*

HOUSTON – December 17, 2018 – [Emancipation Economic Development Council](#) (EEDC) ushers in the next era of progress in the Third Ward with several major announcements. First, EEDC has been designated a [“Texas Main Street City” by the Texas Historical Commission](#) (THC). Second, EEDC has appointed its first executive director, Cary Yates, who will oversee EEDC as the non-profit grows in size and influence in the coming years and hired Alicia Neal as deputy manager to spearhead the above-mentioned Emancipation Avenue Main Street (EAMS) program. Finally, these and other EEDC initiatives are supported by a generous \$500,000 grant from the [Kinder Foundation](#).

### *Emancipation Avenue Main Street program*

In October, Emancipation Avenue was named one of three chosen 2019 Main Street Cities and the first program focused in a major urban area rather than a small town’s historic downtown. The community-based economic revitalization initiative stimulates private sector downtown reinvestment, and helps retain, expand, and recruit small businesses, while also creating new jobs in Texas. THC will provide EEDC with a wide range of services and technical expertise, including design and historic preservation, planning, economic development, organizational management, and training, and partners such as the Greater Southeast Management District will provide additional support.

“The Texas Historical Commission made the right decision in naming the Emancipation Avenue Corridor as a Texas Main Street City. The designation will help preserve a historic area in the City of Houston and lead to more development and economic opportunities,” Mayor Sylvester Turner said. “I look forward to supporting the program and seeing the area continue to thrive. This move also complements my Complete Communities Initiative to improve neighborhoods, so that all Houston residents and business owners can have access to quality services and amenities.”

Under the EAMS program, EEDC will develop and launch a business assistance initiative in Spring 2019 in partnership with Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) of St. Paul, MN. Guided by the NDC model, EEDC will set up and operate a small business assistance program targeted at current businesses seeking to grow, and those looking to develop new businesses. The program will include training classes, technical support and small business loans. The partnership will involve working closely with

neighborhood entrepreneurs to overcome obstacles and barriers to doing business and will provide business services equipping entrepreneurs to start and grow businesses that enrich their economic and social fabric.

### *New leadership*

Cary Yates will join the organization as executive director on December 17, and will lead EEDC into its next phase of impact in the Third Ward by growing it from a community-based neighborhood group into a robust, incorporated non-profit organization. Yates will be responsible for envisioning and implementing strategies that will make Third Ward a resilient, dynamic and economically prosperous community. Yates has spent the last 20 years as a senior vice president for Wells Fargo, and is actively involved in community service in the Houston area, serving on a number of boards including the Houston Area Urban League, Texas Southern University Jesse H. Jones School of Business, and several others.

Alicia Neal, EAMS' new deputy manager, brings 20 years of non-profit leadership experience, with an emphasis on creative program development, community engagement, advocacy and youth workforce development. Her enthusiasm for the Third Ward's history, culture, and artistic presence is matched by her expertise in leading community development non-profits, making her the ideal person to lead the program.

### *Support from the Kinder Foundation*

A generous \$500,000 grant from the Kinder Foundation, pledged earlier this year, will fund EEDC's core expenses during its first fiscal year, with a particular focus on Main Street and NDC. The gift reaffirms the Foundation's commitment to addressing disinvestment and gentrification in the Third Ward.

"The future is bright for the Third Ward," said Cary Yates, EEDC Executive Director. "We are grateful the THC has recognized Emancipation Avenue as historically significant to our state, and that the Kinder Foundation sees the vision of the EEDC and shares our enthusiasm for change-making in this culturally rich part of Houston."

High resolution photos available [here](#).

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### **About the Emancipation Economic Development Council**

The mission of Emancipation Economic Development Council is to inspire hope and contribute to the revitalization and preservation of the Emancipation Park neighborhood of Third Ward. Our vision is a resilient, dynamic, and economically prosperous community where people live, work and thrive in a historically and culturally rich African American neighborhood.

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