



# Economic Opportunity Atlanta, Inc.

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Cities across the country are planning programs similar to the START NOW ATLANTA campaign launched January 10 by Economic Opportunity Atlanta, Inc. to involve more citizens in the war against poverty.

One city official wrote, "In Phoenix (Arizona) we are very enthusiastic about this program and hope that we will be able to follow in your footsteps to work out a similar program for our city."

Miami, Florida already has initiated a similar program and other cities have requested information.

Since START NOW ATLANTA was launched three months ago, 2,277 people have taken poverty area tours led by the poor and EOA has acquired the services of 374 volunteers.

The 2,000th person to take the tours led by the poor was Mrs. Bill Curry, wife of the Baltimore Colts football star, who was presented with a certificate by Vice Mayor Sam Massell in Vine City on March 29.

EOA continues to receive daily requests from people who wish to take the tours or volunteer their time.



The START NOW ATLANTA program was initiated for the hundreds of Atlantans who have asked "How can I find out what needs to be done and what can I do?"

The program offers two phases, one, the tours led by 23 poverty area residents called Volunteer Information People, or V.I.P.'s, and the other a volunteer program.

The poor wanted to lead the tours because, as one said, "We're tired of people coming through here shaking their heads about the rats and garbage and nasty shacks and not seeing us. We're people too and we've done a lot to help ourselves."

Indications are that the tours are really two-way streets; as one V.I.P. put it, "They learn from us and we learn from them."

Those taking the tours are young, middle aged, old. They tour by foot, by car, by bus. They are lawyers, businessmen, doctors, social workers, club women, church members, journalists, visitors to Atlanta, the already concerned, and those not-so-sure-about-it-all. They come in greatest number from Metropolitan Atlanta, but also from various parts of the United States and from countries over the world.

The 374 volunteers are working in a variety of projects, including story hours, adult literacy classes, tutorial programs, marionette shows, horticulture classes and legislative action.

In addition, four white churches have formed partnerships with black churches, 20 college fraternities are working in volunteer projects and some 200 college students are conducting a comprehensive consumer survey in one low-income area.

To volunteer, to arrange a tour for individuals or groups, or to get a speaker or a panel, call 525-4262.