



**BUSINESS & GOVERNMENT**

---

## **BG Blog - T.C. Broadnax: Dallas Years**

By now, we've heard plenty of the inside baseball details about the reasons behind T.C. Broadnax's separation from Dallas, where he has served for seven years as city manager (taking office on February 1, 2017).

With Austin's City Council selecting Broadnax to take over the same job in Central Texas, it's time to examine how he performed in his new role as head of Dallas and how he handled the most pressing challenges that awaited him.

This analysis is helpful for Austin insiders because it paints a picture of how Broadnax might possibly handle hot-button issues in Austin.

He faced substantial problems in areas such as homelessness, economic development, and housing—all of which are currently issues of concern in Austin—suggesting that we can learn a lot from his work with the community and city staff to devise workable solutions.

### **Housing Department Challenges**

When Broadnax began his time in Dallas the city faced significant challenges within the housing department, which was marred by a lack of expertise and [faced issues](#) with documentation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Those problems had implications for the effective administration of federal funds allocated for affordable housing projects.

Broadnax ID'd systemic issues, including a lack of experienced personnel with a deep understanding of housing matters.

The prevailing perception was that individuals transferred to the housing department were those who couldn't succeed elsewhere in the organization, leading to a deficiency in expertise and performance.

## **Solutions:**

To address these challenges, Broadnax initiated a series of reforms aimed at revitalizing the Housing Department and enhancing its effectiveness:

1. **Personnel Changes:** Broadnax conducted a thorough assessment of the department's personnel and made strategic [staffing adjustments](#) to ensure that key positions were filled by individuals with relevant expertise and experience in housing administration.
2. **Emphasis on Expertise:** He emphasized the importance of subject-matter expertise within the department, recognizing its critical role in managing federal funds, implementing affordable housing initiatives, and addressing community needs.
3. **Transparency and Accountability:** Broadnax prioritized transparency and accountability, aiming to rebuild public trust and ensure that federal funds allocated for housing projects were utilized effectively and in accordance with HUD regulations.
4. **Partnerships and Engagement:** Broadnax actively fostered [partnerships](#) with external stakeholders, including HUD, to address documentation issues and streamline processes for accessing federal funding. Additionally, Broadnax engaged directly with community members to understand their housing needs and concerns and incorporated their input into decision-making processes.

## **Reorganization and Personnel Changes**

The City of Dallas was also struggling under the weight of bureaucratic inertia caused by outdated practices and a lack of alignment with community needs that were sapping the efficiency and effectiveness of city operations.

There were many causes of that malaise: an inefficient organizational structure, outdated work practices and workflows, and a mismatch of what services the community needed versus what the city could offer.

Broadnax's [possible answers](#) to those problems started with attempts to streamline operations, foster innovation, and ensure that the city's workforce was equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving urban environment.

## **Solutions:**

To address these challenges, Broadnax implemented a comprehensive reorganization plan and made strategic personnel changes aimed at modernizing city operations and enhancing service delivery:

1. Structural Reforms: Broadnax restructured various city departments and divisions, [including police](#), to streamline workflows, improve communication channels, and enhance coordination among different units.
2. Talent Acquisition: He recruited top talent from diverse backgrounds to fill key leadership positions within the city government, prioritizing individuals with a track record of innovation, collaboration, and results-oriented leadership.
3. Performance Management: Broadnax introduced [performance management](#) systems and accountability measures to monitor progress, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that city employees remained focused on achieving strategic objectives.
4. Community Engagement: He emphasized the importance of community engagement and citizen participation in decision-making processes, which fosters a culture of transparency, responsiveness, and accountability within the city government.

## **Community Engagement and Transparency**

Broadnax publicly discussed how he recognized the importance of community [engagement and transparency](#) as fundamental pillars of effective governance in Dallas, a viewpoint that is certainly shared here in Austin.

Upon becoming city manager in Dallas, he identified challenges in engaging its diverse population in civic affairs, with many residents feeling disconnected from the decision-making processes that impacted their lives.

He also saw persistent, significant communication gaps between the city government and the community, leading to misinformation, mistrust, and frustration among residents. This perception was worsened by a lack of transparency in city operations and decision-making processes, with residents often feeling left in the dark about key initiatives, policies, and projects.

### **Solutions:**

1. Community Outreach Programs: Broadnax [launched](#) a series of community outreach programs and initiatives to increase citizen participation in local governance. These included town hall meetings, neighborhood forums, and online engagement platforms designed to solicit feedback, address concerns, and build trust between the city government and residents.
2. Open Data Initiatives: He implemented open data initiatives to make government data [more accessible](#) and understandable to the public. This included the creation of online portals and dashboards where residents could access information about city services, budgets, contracts, and performance metrics.
3. Transparency Measures: Broadnax introduced [transparency](#) measures, with [mixed results](#), to ensure that city operations and decision-making processes were conducted openly and

ethically. This included establishing clear guidelines for public meetings, hearings, and consultations and publishing comprehensive reports and documentation to keep residents informed about government activities.

4. Community Partnerships: He fostered partnerships with community organizations, non-profits, and advocacy groups to expand the reach of city initiatives and leverage local expertise in addressing pressing challenges and priorities.

## **Economic Development and Homelessness**

The intertwined nature of economic development and [homelessness](#) were also among the critical issues affecting the prosperity and well-being of Dallas residents when Broadnax took over as city manager.

The problems, in his eyes, were tied to persistent economic disparities, with certain neighborhoods experiencing limited investment and economic opportunities compared to others.

This inequality hindered the city's overall economic growth and prosperity. Inequality was a main agent of Dallas' homelessness crisis, characterized by high rates of homelessness and insufficient support services for individuals experiencing housing instability, much like in Austin.

### **Solutions:**

1. Economic Development Strategy: Broadnax spearheaded the development and implementation of a comprehensive [economic development strategy](#) to foster business growth, attract investment, and create job opportunities across various sectors. This strategy included targeted initiatives such as tax incentives, business incubation programs, and infrastructure improvements to support economic revitalization in underserved communities.
2. Homelessness Prevention Programs: Stable housing (including [rapid rehousing](#)), supportive services, and employment assistance to individuals and families at risk of homelessness were the main components of the homelessness prevention programs Broadnax pushed forward. The city began targeting and solving poverty, unemployment, and lack of affordable housing, with government agencies, non-profits, and relevant community stakeholders lending key support.
3. Policy Advocacy: Broadnax engaged in policy advocacy efforts to try to secure state and [federal funding](#), legislation, and policy reforms to support homelessness prevention and economic development efforts in Dallas. By actively participating in regional and national coalitions, Broadnax sought to amplify the city's voice and influence in shaping policies and allocating resources to address critical issues affecting the community.