

## The Scope

### Bigger Vision Of Athens Monthly Newsletter



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#### Bigger Vision Highlights:

You might have heard that Bigger Vision is interested in helping develop one or more “tiny homes” communities somewhere around Athens. This project is in its early stages, but we have high hopes that we can help facilitate the development of one or more of these communities.

What is this “tiny homes” concept? It’s a group of 10 to 12 very small homes, along with a main building housing a kitchen, showers, laundry, meeting space, and maybe an office. The outside areas would have attractive landscaping, including walkways and maybe a gazebo for community gatherings. Why would we want to do this? The simple answer is cost - the cost of building this type of community, including the small size of the land, is less than in typical development, and some of the structures can be built off site and shipped to its permanent location. The low cost would enable the rent for these units to be more affordable than most others, provide a place people would want to live, and be attractive to the rest of the community.

Why is affordable housing so important to us here at Bigger Vision? Well, our shelter, in concert with lots of other service providers, works hard to get folks who are homeless on their feet by getting them education, jobs, clothing, health care, and rental subsidies for much of the first year. Yet after all that, some of them still have trouble finding a place to live that is affordable after the subsidies go away. Those in homelessness also have challenges getting accepted by landlords because they potentially have spotty rental and employment records, lower incomes, and/or criminal

records, any one of which can get them turned down.

While a community of this type can be sustainable on its own with a for-profit developer, the need for affordable housing has been recognized by federal, state, and local governments, which have worked together to make funding available to build and support affordable housing communities. Some of those funds are available through the Federal American Rescue Funds, while other funding comes through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. There are also funds available for services to help residents that move into the community to help support issues that could affect stable housing, like a medical crisis, addiction relapse, or a sudden job loss. These services are an area where Bigger Vision, along with other service providers, want to continue helping.

There are some obstacles, however. One is that securing this funding can take a long time. Another is that it may require a zoning change, which can be challenging if neighbors are not in support. They might fear that the community will look unattractive, be poorly maintained or overcrowded, or bring people around who may be dangerous in some way.

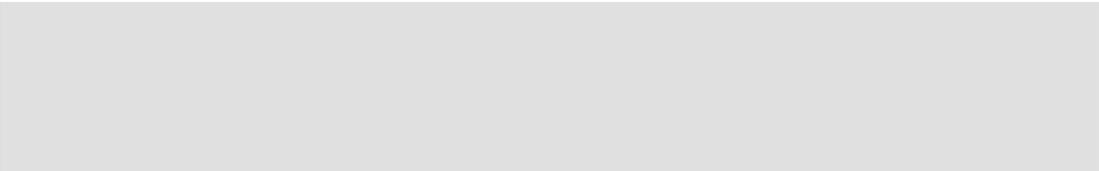
To move this vision forward, Bigger Vision has partnered with other service providers, landowners and experts in other areas like architecture, engineering, real estate development, zoning, and funding. Together we have formed a rather large task force that is gathering information, resources, and other interested parties. We are not exactly close to breaking ground on any projects, but we are hopeful. Making this kind of thing happen is relatively new and innovative, and requires the bringing together of lots of stakeholders in a complex way. It won't be easy, but our community and many others around the nation are ready to rethink affordable housing and create something that truly works for everyone.

*Steven J. Mason*  
*Executive Director*  
*Bigger Vision of Athens*

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## Donor Spotlight of the Month:

This March, Bigger Vision would like to acknowledge a few groups that really went out of their way to make it a special month for the shelter and our guests! This past month, Bigger Vision received funding in the amount of \$30,000.00 from Creature Comforts Get Comfortable Campaign! This incredible sum of money will be used to continue supporting the costs associated with operating the Abundant Life Program for **one full year.** Creature Comforts has shown how impactful our local businesses can be when we work together towards a common goal and invest in the people around us. Thank you Creature Comforts and everyone involved with supporting this campaign and the Athens-Clarke County community!





Another fantastic group that we would love to show our appreciation for are Radi and Rachel Nabulsi, UGASports, and all of the people who helped contribute towards their fundraising campaign! In honor of UGA Football's first National Championship victory in over four decades, UGASports sent confetti from Lucas Oil Stadium to fans as a memento for such an unforgettable season. To show appreciation to UGASports for doing this, confetti recipients began donating funds to help cover the costs of shipping, knowing that any residual funds were to be donated to a local agency. Thanks to the generosity of the Nabulsi Family and UGASports, Bigger Vision received \$1,300.00 that will be used to improve the shelter and make it even more comfortable for our guests! Thank you Radi and Rachel Nabulsi, UGASports, and all of the readers that helped make this possible!

The logo for UGASPORTS.COM is displayed in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on a red rectangular background. The word 'COM' is smaller and positioned to the right of 'SPORTS'.

Speaking of UGA Football, Bigger Vision is incredibly grateful to have had a portion of the football team and coaching staff here at Bigger Vision this past month! During their visit, players and coaches took a tour of the facility, learned more about poverty and homelessness here in Clarke County, and learned about all of the different ways that Bigger Vision tries to help. Most importantly, these young men learned all of the different ways, big and small, that they can use their platform to help vulnerable and disadvantaged groups here in Athens and throughout the country as they continue to grow and mature into their careers. Once the tour was finished, we made sure we put those boys to work! While volunteering here at the shelter, these hardworking group helped:

- Create over 150 sandwich bags
- Put together over 250 hygiene and emergency weather kits
- Organized our *messy* tool shed
- Donated 40 meals to feed our guests

We absolutely loved having this group here with us, and we can't wait to have them back next year when they bring the National Championship back home to Athens!



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## Volunteer Opportunities:

Bigger Vision recently increased the number of available Evening Volunteer slots to three individuals! Both the Meal Provider and Evening Volunteer roles are still being performed with the same precautions that have been in place during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals that are interested in being an Evening Volunteer are encouraged to sign up early in advance, as openings fill up quickly once posted. Sign up to become a:

### Meal Provider Volunteer

- In a group or individually, plan & prepare, or purchase a meal for a minimum of 40 guests.
- Deliver & drop off the meal at Bigger Vision between 5:00-5:30pm.
- Usually, we would ask volunteers to serve the meal to the guests but due to COVID-19 we ask that they only drop off the meal.

### **OPEN MARCH DATES FOR MEAL PROVIDER VOLUNTEER**

**March 3rd**  
**March 9th**  
**March 11th**  
**March 18th**  
**March 29th**

### Evening Volunteer

- Assisting staff with guest check-ins
- Assisting guests with minor issues
- Help facilitate smooth dinner process
- Build relationships with guests through conversations and games
- Provide encouragement and offer advice when requested

### Evening Sessions

- Provide an enriching experience for up to ten individuals that can

cover any number of topics including, but not limited to:

- Financial Literacy
- Health/Wellness
- Coping Strategies
- Religious Groups
- Local Services
- Recreation/Hobbies
- Education/Skill Building

To sign up for an evening session, please reach out to our director, Steven Mason, at [director@biggervisionofathens.org](mailto:director@biggervisionofathens.org).

### Questions?

Please don't hesitate to reach out for assistance! We are always available to help with the volunteer sign-up process. To contact us via email, please send your questions to [fundraising.biggervision@gmail.com](mailto:fundraising.biggervision@gmail.com). To reach us by phone, dial the shelter number at 706-340-6062 and hit extension 3.

[Learn More](#)

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## Opportunities for Financial Donations:

**Bed Sponsorship Program:** While any donation is greatly appreciated, we have a goal of raising enough money to sponsor all of the beds for the guests of our overnight stay program. One night's stay includes two meals, a shower/laundry, and any basic necessities a guest may need. Please email [Director@BiggerVisionOfAthens.org](mailto:Director@BiggerVisionOfAthens.org) or go to our website if you are interested in donating to one of our three commitment tiers:

### **BRONZE LEVEL**



**Bronze Bed Sponsorship:  
\$20/Monthly Commitment**

Contributions are recognized with:  
Standard magnet with chosen name on bed & recognition on the Bigger Vision of Athens website & social media

*\*1 bed for 1 night each month\**

### **SILVER LEVEL**



**Silver Bed Sponsorship:  
\$250/Monthly Commitment**

Contributions are recognized with:  
Custom magnet with chosen name, a photo op with you/your group, & recognition on the Bigger Vision of Athens website & social media

### **GOLD LEVEL**



**Gold Bed Sponsorship:  
\$500/Monthly Commitment**

Contributions are recognized with:  
Stand-alone custom magnet with chosen name & logo on bed, a photo-op with you/your group, & recognition on the Bigger Vision of Athens website & social media

**Givebutter** – Using Givebutter, you will be able to contribute as a one time donation, or as a monthly contribution to the Bed Sponsorship program through the portal on our [website](#) or by scanning the QR code provided.



**Check** – If your check represents a Bed Sponsorship, please indicate so in the memo line. Either drop them off in-person M-F between 9am-4pm, or mail it to:

The Bigger Vision of Athens, Inc.,  
P.O. Box 8022, Athens, GA 30603

**Other Opportunities:** If the bed sponsorship program isn't right for you, we appreciate one-time donations as well through the avenues listed above. In addition, we provide the option for you to donate while also shopping online or for your groceries:

**Amazon Smile** – When using [Smile.Amazon.com](#) (instead of Amazon.com), a percentage of every purchase you make will be donated to Bigger Vision of Athens if you select our organization.

**Kroger Plus** – Activate [Kroger Community Rewards](#) to donate a percentage of every purchase you make using your Kroger Plus card to BVOA if you select our organization.

**Creative Ways to Donate:** Here are some fun ways to get your network involved in your support of Bigger Vision!



**St. Patrick's Day Donation**

Embrace the power of **green** and donate towards Bigger Vision's Bed Sponsorship Program!



**Spring Cleaning Time**

Spring is right around the corner! Do some Spring Cleaning and donate any gently used items to our guests here at Bigger Vision!



**Lead an Evening Group**

Do you have a special skill or knowledge set that you'd like to share with others? Help lead an Evening Group from 8:00-9:30!

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**Opportunities for Item Donations:**

**Amazon Registry:** Our supply of items fluctuates, so we keep a list of items we currently need on

This month's **highest** needs:

- **PONCHOS**
- **LOTION**

[Amazon](#).

Walmart Registry for Good – Visit our [Walmart](#) registry to see more items the shelter is in need of, including gift cards that can be used for future purchases!

- [NEW MENS/WOMENS UNDERWEAR](#)
- [NEW SOCKS](#)
- [RAZORS](#)
- Assorted Snacks
- Disposable Water Bottles

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## COVID-19 Shelter Updates:

Beginning August 15th, Bigger Vision began requiring guests to show proof of vaccination before being given access to services, including laundry, shower, and shelter services. Guests that do not have proof of vaccination are still able to ring the doorbell to inquire about basic necessities, but they are asked to put on a mask before conversing with staff members. Guests that are not vaccinated but are interested in doing so can be given assistance in locating the nearest vaccination site. Upon careful consideration of the positive outcomes we have seen regarding the number of guests who have chosen to be vaccinated, Bigger Vision increased the number of available beds from 24 to 30 on September 9th, 2021. Up to ten guests at a time are now permitted to use the common space for games and other recreational activities so long as proper distancing can still occur.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, we modified our services to better serve those experiencing homelessness in our community including:

- In line with the most recent CDC approved COVID-19 protocol regarding emergency shelters, we have capped our bed capacity at 30 (a reduction from our usual 34 guests, but up from the 24 we've been able to serve) to allow for appropriate safety measures to take place.
- Offering a limited number of to-go dinners each day.
- Offering afternoon showers & laundry from 1:00pm to 4:00pm Thursday-Sunday by appointment.
- Guests are having their temperature checked, are asked to sanitize their hands & are required to wear a mask.

### Words from the Director

"By investigating the possibility of developing a tiny home community, Bigger Vision and our partners are hoping to find new avenues to continue helping the people we serve".

**Steven Mason**  
Executive Director

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### Upcoming Events

**March 19th**  
Street Love Ministries  
Giveaway Event



- In the case of exposure to the virus, we will close the shelter until we deem it safe to return.

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## FAQ:

What is the best time of the day to drop off item donations?

- Donors are more than welcome to drop off item donations at whatever time is most convenient. The least busy time of the day to drop off items is between 9:00 and 1:00, but we understand that this time frame may not work for everyone. If you're interested in dropping off items directly to the shelter, please don't hesitate to come on by!

What is the status of the ACC funded tent camp?

- Bigger Vision has kept in regular contact with the agency that is contracted to operate the camp once it opens. Updates on the official opening date, as well as Bigger Vision's role within this encampment, will be communicated to interested parties through Bigger Vision's social media accounts as information is provided to us.

Has there been shift in the timeline regarding volunteers serving dinner indoors again?

- Presently, there has not been a shift in the COVID-19 protocols and procedures here at Bigger Vision. Each month, Bigger Vision's Board of Directors discuss this matter and make a decision about how to best proceed. While it is incredibly difficult not being able to provide the full volunteer experience, these decisions are made for the safety of our guests, volunteers, and staff. We are diligently monitoring the situation, and will begin allowing dinner providers back inside to serve as soon as the board feels it is safe to do so. If you have any additional questions, please don't hesitate to [reach out](#).

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Connect with us

Bigger Vision of Athens, Inc. | 706-340-6062 | [Volunteer](#) | [Website](#)

