

Dr. Michael C. Threatt Renews Sanford Housing Authority's Culture and Releases New Leadership and Organizational Values

From Dysfunction to Renewal: How a Comprehensive HR Audit and WiLD Trust Survey Helped the SHA Move from an Entitlement Culture to a Performance Culture

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EINPresswire.com/ -- When Dr. Michael C. Threatt stepped into the CEO role at the Sanford Housing Authority (SHA) in December 2024, he didn't just inherit a failing organization; he inherited a nightmare. A poor-performing team with limited capacity, one of the worst organizational cultures he had seen in his 20-year career, and a deeply entrenched entitlement mindset where the cliché ruled: "We have always done it like this."

SHA was a troubled performer under a HUD Recovery Agreement for its public housing program; its LIHTC portfolio was under Risk Asset status; its Section 8 program was only a standard performer; and funds had been recaptured annually for its Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) and Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) [programs](#) since 2021. This wasn't just a compliance issue; it was a culture problem. A toxic reputation preceded the agency, and the lack of industry certifications and skills underscored the dysfunction.

"Transformational leadership causes poor performers to leave organizations and vice versa, bad leadership causes good performers to leave," said Dr. Threatt. He often quotes John Maxwell: "Teamwork makes the dream work." But he adds that most people leave off the rest of the quote, "A vision becomes a nightmare when the leader has a big dream and a bad team."

Renew: Culture, People, and Purpose

When Dr. Threatt discovered the depth of dysfunction, he immediately engaged Bloodhart



The graphic features a circular logo with the letters 'W', 'E', and 'A' in blue and red segments, with 'CAN' in the center. Below the logo, the text reads: 'WE CAN Leadership Values. These values define how we lead and support one another as a team.' To the right, a list of values is provided: 'W Welcomed: We create inclusive spaces where everyone feels seen and heard.', 'E Engagement: We are present, proactive, and committed to meaningful collaboration.', 'C Caring: We lead with empathy and compassion.', 'A Accountable: We take ownership of our actions and outcomes.', and 'N Nurturing: We invest in the growth and well-being of our people.'

WE CAN Leadership Values for the Sanford Housing Authority

Consulting to conduct the WiLD [Trust Index Survey](#)—a diagnostic tool to measure trust and uncover cultural fractures. The results were sobering, revealing three critical themes:

1. Leadership and Organizational Dysfunction: The legacy of prior leadership left behind a culture marked by mistrust and chaos.

Example Quote: “The Blind leading the Blind is how I would categorize my answers above, and that no one wants to take accountability.”



Dr. Threatt’s Response: “We are committed to fostering a transparent, accountable, and communicative environment. We are actively dismantling silos, rebuilding trust, and aligning leadership behaviors with our organizational values.”

“

As the CEO, I am responsible for people, culture, and results. I am grateful for the WiLD Trust Survey we conducted when I first started. It provided the framework to Renew our culture and values.”

Dr. Michael C. Threatt, CEO of the Sanford Housing Authority (NC)

2. Training, Resources, and Role Preparedness: Staff lacked clarity, tools, and training to succeed.

Example Quote: “I was hired to [do X]. Assistance is given, but not where it would give great direction... I believe more training, workshops, and weekly meetings will increase understanding of each employee’s weaknesses and strengths.”

Dr. Threatt’s Response: “We are committed to prioritizing professional development, role clarity, and resource allocation to ensure every team member is equipped and empowered to perform at their best.”

3. Burnout and Negative Work Culture: Years of neglect left employees fatigued and morale at rock bottom.

Example Quote: “There is a deep level of burnout and insecurity across [named] departments, due to the condition of these programs and the constant battle of trying to fix the past while planning for the future.”

Dr. Threatt’s Response: “We are committed to addressing this head-on by promoting work-life

balance, recognizing contributions, and cultivating a culture of respect, inclusion, and psychological safety.”

“As the CEO, I am responsible for people, culture, and results. I am grateful for the WILD Trust Survey we conducted when I first started. It provided the framework to Renew our culture and values,” said Dr. Threatt.

New Leadership and Organizational Values

At the heart of SHA's Renewal are actionable values born from these insights:

WE CAN (Leadership Values)

- Welcomed – Inclusive spaces where everyone feels seen
- Engagement – Active collaboration and commitment
- Caring – Empathy and compassion in leadership
- Accountable – Ownership of actions and outcomes
- Nurturing – Investing in growth and well-being

I CAN (Organizational Values)

- Innovate – Embrace change and creativity
- Collaborate – Work across teams and disciplines
- Automate – Streamline processes for efficiency
- Navigate – Adapt with agility and lead through uncertainty

Comprehensive HR Audit: 14 Key Indicators Reviewed

Dr. Threatt assessed the Human Resources Department and partnered with sigma-Cogent Solutions to conduct a comprehensive HR audit. The audit revealed systemic weaknesses. SHA lacked an effective HR Department, and its failing scores reflected an agency that did not value employees, training, or accountability.

Key Findings and Actions Across 14 Areas:

1. Structure – Restructured departments and clarified roles.
2. Recruitment – Implemented Breezy HR.
3. Onboarding – Standardized checklists and digital workflows.
4. Scheduling – Adopted hybrid and remote work policies.
5. Compensation – Offered competitive pay and conducted a salary study with Nelrod.
6. Payroll – Digitized processes and ensured compliance checks.
7. Engagement – Conducted stay interviews and implemented recognition programs.



8. Performance – Held quarterly reviews and annual evaluations.
9. Job Analysis – Updated descriptions and validated classifications.
10. Employee Relations – Implemented conflict resolution and Reset process.
11. Compliance – Overhauled manual systems and digitized files.
12. Policies – Created new Employee Handbook to align with new vision.
13. HRIS – Partnered with Reframe housing software for a cloud-based system.
14. Offboarding – Developed checklists, conducted exit interviews, and succession planning.

These actions are helping the SHA [create a culture](#) that moves from entitlement to performance.

Human Resources: Building the PHA of the Future

To address these challenges, Dr. Threatt implemented a Human Resources Goal under its Roadmap 2030 strategic plan to attract, develop, and retain a high-performing workforce to build the housing authority of the future, with the following success indicators:

- Launching a strategic recruitment campaign to attract top talent
- Providing continuous training and professional development
- Cultivating a positive, inclusive, and values-driven culture
- Conducting regular performance evaluations with actionable feedback
- Enhancing employee benefits and wellness initiatives
- Promoting leadership development and succession planning
- Tracking and improving employee satisfaction and retention

From Entitlement to Performance: Breaking the Cycle

Dr. Threatt has implemented a sweeping cultural and operational transformation, marking the next chapter in SHA's turnaround story. Building on the momentum of his 180-Day Strategic Impact and Vision Report, State of the Housing Authority (SOTHA), Roadmap 2030 Five-Year Strategic Plan, C-Suite Reset, and Organizational Culture Renewal.

Dr. Threatt's leadership message is clear: "We are building a housing authority of the future, one that values its workforce as its greatest asset."

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