Meet Kandice Allen Mitchell: Program Director for State and Local Policy

Tell me how your previous work made you interested in working for policy change for affordable housing?

I’ve had the opportunity to work as an attorney in the education space with Atlanta Public Schools’ Office of General Counsel, as well as in the criminal justice space with the City of Atlanta’s Municipal Court. Through that work, I began to make connections about the benefits of fostering healthy communities at every income level—and how healthy communities often present fewer educational challenges for children. My hope is that through prioritizing affordable and thriving neighborhoods, we reduce instances of academic underperformance while also reducing the number of interactions young people have with our penal system.

What has surprised you most about state and local policy change?

I am most surprised by how often people of various political leanings fundamentally agree on basic community values and needs.

What do you find most challenging about policy work?

The most challenging aspect of policy work, for me, is that despite sharing a core value-set, the process of designing a resolution becomes a huge barrier to consensus.

What might (someone) be surprised to know about you?

People might be surprised to know that I am quite the daredevil. Despite being incredibly nervous, I have done things like bungee-jump from the highest bridge in South Africa. I’ve even gone skydiving. I love challenging myself with things I’m a little afraid of.

What do you think will change over the next five years by having this new position?

Having grown up on the south side of Chicago, I have some perspective on the challenges that underserved communities present for its residents. I have a special interest in opening access so that people can thrive despite their income levels. Over the next five years and beyond, I will incorporate my perspective, along with the voices of community members, in the work I undertake and the conversations I have so that the solutions align with the needs of the people we seek to serve.

What do you do when you aren’t working?

When I’m not working, I love to be out exploring cities, restaurants, places and spaces with my husband, friends and family (including my 12-year-old mini-poodle, Kolby). I enjoy being active—but, I also love the opportunity to relax and indulge in a great book or television series (shout out to Pose which is my current favorite).