

2 YEAR MAYORAL RESUME

Mayor Leonardo "Leo" Williams has a compelling narrative marked by a successful transition from education to entrepreneurship and now, impactful political leadership. These accomplishments paint a picture of Mayor Williams as a dynamic and results-oriented leader who effectively bridges experience from education, business, and politics to drive positive change and elevate Durham's standing on both local and national levels.

Here are some of his top success stories and accomplishments as Mayor of Durham, North Carolina:

1. Launching the Bull City Future Fund:

- This is a flagship initiative launched in partnership with the United Way of the Greater Triangle and the Triangle Community Foundation.
- It's designed to tackle youth violence and promote positive youth engagement.
- A significant success is its fundraising achievement, having already raised **over \$1 million** to directly invest in local nonprofits working with youth. This demonstrates his ability to foster public-private partnerships and attract substantial funding for critical social issues.

2. Guiding Durham's Growth and Fiscal Responsibility:

- As Mayor, he leads a rapidly growing city of nearly 320,000 residents.
- He oversees a substantial **\$755 million city budget**, the largest city budget in Durham's history.
- He has been instrumental in the **creation of significant policies that positively impact the quality of life in Durham**, indicating effective governance and a focus on resident well-being.

3. Elevating Durham's National Profile:

- Mayor Williams is a recognized voice on the national stage, notably as a **featured speaker at the 2024 Democratic National Convention**. This showcases his ability to represent Durham and its values on a prominent platform.
- He has **welcomed Presidents and Vice Presidents to the Durham and Greater Triangle region over twenty times**, demonstrating his networking prowess and commitment to showcasing Durham's innovative and historical culture on the world stage, attracting federal attention and investment.

4. Transitioning from Education to Entrepreneurship (and Job Creation):

- His background as a **two-time Durham Public Schools Teacher of the Year** and public school leader provides a deep understanding of community needs, particularly concerning youth.
- His entrepreneurial success as co-founder of **Zweli's**, the first full-service authentic Zimbabwean restaurant in the United States with his wife, is a remarkable feat.
- The expansion to **three restaurants in Durham** "intentionally providing jobs for residents" highlights his commitment to economic development and local employment.
- He's the only elected official in Durham city and county that has to make a payroll every two weeks.

5. Recognition Among Mayoral Peers:

- His inclusion as an **inaugural Hunt Institute Mayor** and a **Bloomberg Mayor** signifies recognition of his leadership and innovative approaches by influential national organizations.
- His membership in the **exclusive New Deal Mayors**, focusing on bipartisan approaches, and his newly elected position on the **African American Mayors Association board of trustees**, further solidify his standing as a respected leader among his counterparts.
- His leading role on the **Economic and Workforce Development commission at the United States Conference of Mayors** and membership in the **United States Roundtable of Mayors** underscore his influence in shaping national urban policy discussions.

These accomplishments paint a picture of Mayor Williams as a dynamic and results-oriented leader who effectively bridges experience from education, business, and politics to drive positive change and elevate Durham's standing on both local and national levels.

The Durham City Council, particularly over the last two years (roughly 2023-2025), has focused on a range of initiatives aimed at community safety, economic development, infrastructure, and social equity. While Mayor Leonardo Williams took office in December 2023, the accomplishments of the council reflect the collective efforts during this period, often with Mayor Williams playing a key role as a council member and then as Mayor.

Top Accomplishments of the Durham City Council under Mayor Williams' leadership:

- **Significant Budget Approvals with Focus on Community Needs:** The Council has approved substantial budgets, including the recent **\$772 million plan for the 2025-2026 fiscal year**. These budgets prioritize key areas:
 - **Community Safety:** Expanding programs like the **HEART (Holistic Engagement and Response Team) response team** by adding 17 full-time staff. They also support programs like the **Durham Expunction and Restoration (DEAR) Program** (helping residents clear criminal charges and restore driver's licenses) and the **Eviction Diversion Program** to prevent homelessness.
 - **Employee Support:** Increasing pay to remain competitive and raising the **minimum livable wage for City workers** from \$19.58 to \$21.90 per hour.
 - **Service Delivery:** Keeping GoDurham buses **fare-free through June 2026** and investing \$17 million in expanding bus service. They also allocated \$500,000 for **Vision Zero safety work** to reduce deadly crashes.
- **Major Infrastructure Investments:** The Council has committed significant funds to essential infrastructure upgrades, often leveraging voter-approved bonds:
 - **Water and Sewer Systems:** Allocating \$315.7 million for upgrades, including work on the Jordan Lake Water Treatment Plant.
 - **Stormwater Improvements:** Dedicating \$25.7 million for stormwater improvements and flood reduction, including the South Ellerbe Restoration project.
 - **Parks and Recreation:** Adding \$7 million for lead soil cleanup at five parks (East Durham, East End, Lyon, Northgate, Walltown). Funding major Connect Durham bond projects such as a new **\$43 million aquatic center at Merrick-Moore Park** and a **\$42 million project to connect Long Meadow and East End parks**.
 - **Streets and Sidewalks:** Significantly increasing funding for street repaving (\$25 million, up from \$15 million) and sidewalk repairs (\$10 million, up from \$2 million) through the \$115 million Connect Durham bond.
- **Strategic Planning and Policy Creation:** The City Council adopted the **FY24-FY26 Strategic Plan** in June 2023, which outlines five key goals: Shared Economic Prosperity, Creating a Safer Community Together, Connected, Engaged, and Inclusive Communities, Innovative and High-Performing Organization, and Thriving and Vibrant Environment. This plan serves as a guiding vision for transforming the growing city. The Council has also led on the creation of significant policies that positively impact the quality of life in Durham.
- **Affordable Housing and Development:** The Council has continued to address the critical need for affordable housing, with discussions and approvals for income-restricted apartment units. While specific projects can sometimes be debated, the overall goal of increasing housing options remains a priority. For example, they

recently approved substantial amendments to housing plans to address urgent community needs.

These accomplishments highlight the Durham City Council's commitment to strategic investment, community well-being, and progressive policy-making over the past two years.