

Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition

Resilient Georgia Regional Grantee Annual Report

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Resilient Georgia Regional Grantee Annual Report 2021



About the Resilient Georgia Regional Grants



<u>Resilient Georgia</u> has been working with 12 cities across Georgia and the surrounding counties to provide a regional emphasis on trauma-informed awareness and care, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and child sexual abuse prevention training as a basis to transform systems and procedures crossing both public and private sectors.

- Resilient Georgia serves as a supportive and guiding resource during each region's planning and implementation process.
- These regional action plans each address the behavioral health needs of individuals birth through 26 years old and families in the community and surrounding counties using the Collective Impact framework (a diverse, robust and well-planned public-private partnership).
- Trauma-Informed Care, ACEs, and child sexual abuse prevention can be the basis for systemic changes in a community. Each region has identified how one or more of these content areas are delivered to diverse community members through formal training, education, marketing, and communications.
- Round 1 grants were awarded in Nov 2019 to regional coalitions based out of Athens, Augusta, Macon, Savannah, and surrounding areas. Round 2 grants were awarded in July 2020 to regional coalitions based out of Albany, Columbus, Rome, Thomasville, and surrounding areas. Round 3 grants were awarded in March 2021 to regional coalitions based out of Clayton, Cobb, Gwinnett, Valdosta, and surrounding areas.

Overview: The Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition







Coalition Mission

A trauma-informed behavioral health continuum of care is among the most urgent and important priorities for Athens-Clarke County and for the Northeast Georgia region. Four cornerstones of institutional support have worked collaboratively to ensure the stewardship and success of this funding in improving trauma-informed practices specialized for individuals birth to 26 in the Northeast Georgia region: Athens Area Community Foundation, Athens Wellbeing Project, Envision Athens, and the University of Georgia. These partners have adopted five main aims reaching multiple targeted populations, formulated to both align with the priorities of Resilient Georgia and the unique needs of the area.

Coalition Summary

The Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition is led by the Athens Area Community Foundation, Envision Athens, the Athens Wellbeing Project, and University of Georgia. Continuing to build on the accomplishments of year one, the coalition has honed its year two focus on identifying, promoting, and implementing evidence-based coalition efforts in rural, urban and suburban areas in the region. The target populations reached by these efforts are:

- Juveniles aging out of the justice system
- Foster children and families
- People living in recovery
- Two-generation partners providing services to homeless and transitional youth.
- Mental and behavioral health service providers

The coalition, among several efforts, holds trainings on trauma and resiliency-building, evaluates behavioral health utilization and outcomes in the region via the now-completed **Behavioral Health Community Needs Assessment**, and promotes whole-community wellbeing through partnerships with dynamic, trauma-aware service providers in the region. Several microgrants were dispersed to such providers during the second year of the grant, bolstering the work of partners in their communities and bringing a trauma-informed lens to the region. Lastly, the coalition has focused on collecting and creating resources and research that can be used by partners, stakeholders, and the coalition as it continues to champion trauma-informed practices in the community.

Leadership Team, Contributors, and Coalition Partners

Leadership Team and Contributors

Sarah McKinney

President and CEO, Athens Area Community Foundation

Dr. Grace Bagwell Adams

UGA College of Public Health and Principal Investigator, Athens Wellbeing Project

Erin Barger

Project Manager, Envision Athens

Meredith Lysaught

Project Manager, Athens Area Community Foundation

Coalition Partners

Public

Jay Johnson, Chief Probation Officer, Athens-Clarke County Probation Services

Private

Matt Hanner, Motion House Media Sole to Soul Therapy and Consulting

Academic

Megan Bramlett, UGA College of Public Health Dr. Diane Bales, UGA Family and Consumer Sciences Department

Dr. Courtney Still-Brown, UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (Extension 4-H Office)

Dr. Brian Bride, Professor, Georgia State University

Dr. Amanda Abraham, UGA School of Public and International Affairs

Dr. Justin Lavner, UGA Department of Psychology

Juvenile Justice

Julita Sanders, Executive Director, Juvenile Offender Advocates, Inc.

Non-Profits

Tim Johnson, Executive Director, Family Connection-Communities in Schools of Athens

Sonya Hope, Regional Manager, Georgia Family Connection Partnership Region 5

Anna Bearden, Executive Director, Chosen for Life Ministries

Melinda Allen, Executive Director, Bethel Haven, Inc.

Katie Deans, LPC, NCC, TBRI Practitioner, Staff

Therapist, Bethel Haven Inc.

Alicia Battle, Executive Director, Goodwill of Northeast Georgia

Community Organizations

Jacob Lambeck, Athens Area Community Foundation **John Morris**, Envision Athens

Housing and Food Shelters

Shea Post, Executive Director, Athens Area Homeless Shelter

Erin Barger, CEO, Food Bank of Northeast Georgia

Other Partners

The hundreds of participants who attended our training events. They represent all forms of organizations across Northeast Georgia and beyond.

Message from the Principal Investigator

The history of our Athens Area Community Foundation is important to the "why" behind working with leaders like Resilient Georgia. When we were founded in 2008 by a group of local leaders, The Honorable Steve Jones was our first Board Chairman. He expressed the need for a community foundation to help identify needs and match them to the resources available. The founders envisioned a community foundation that encouraged giving, brought people together for a common cause, and served as a strong beacon for community change.

Fast forward thirteen years and our mission, vision, values, and culture continue to honor the ideas, hopes, and dreams the founding members had for our work. Today, the Athens Area Community Foundation is a vibrant and vital organization serving the region. We are a trusted partner for local organizations, a trusted guide for local philanthropy, and a trusted community leader, and when you anchor your giving here, you allow us to lead, partner, and guide.

With the trust brokered by Resilient Georgia in 2019, through the Behavioral Health Grant, we embarked on a two-year journey with local partners, the Athens Wellbeing Project, and Envision Athens. Our goals were to pursue training and programs that supported a trauma informed behavioral health continuum of care. In this issue you will read about the efforts on:

- Youth aging out of juvenile justice services,
- People living in recovery and foster care families,
- Homeless and transitional youth,
- Evidenced based trauma trainings for the community at large, and the
- Development and delivery of a comprehensive behavioral health community needs assessment.

In this comprehensive annual report, you will read about the training, content, and programming we have curated and delivered with community partners to address trauma informed care systems. Every aspect of our work has been in collaboration with, and for, our community and is the direct and positive result of your investment with us.

Organizations like Resilient Georgia create the dynamic legacy we love to talk about. The efforts, resources, and commitment needed to make lasting and positive change often require the commitment and foresight of people who may never see the cumulative results of their generosity realized. The impact you create today, tomorrow, and long after our time, is your dynamic legacy.

On behalf of our partners and community, we thank you.

Sarah McKinney

President | CEO, Athens Area Community Foundation

Coalition Key Impacts and Accomplishments

In the second year of the Resilient Georgia trauma-informed care grant, the **Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition** has expanded on its year-one efforts to bring trauma-informed, youth-centered, and community-adapted initiatives and opportunities to Northeast Georgia. The coalition has focused on education and awareness campaigns, trainings, and community grantmaking to strengthen the prevention of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

Key Impacts and Accomplishments

New Training Opportunities and Offerings for the Region

Building on connections forged in year one, the coalition expanded the menu of training opportunities to offer Community Resiliency Model (CRM) sessions and Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) workshops to partners and stakeholders across the region.

Data-Driven Community
Needs Assessment

Pulling regionally-specific data points from the second iteration of the Athens Wellbeing Project's report and secondary data sources, the coalition has leveraged data to guide ACEs prevention efforts across all six counties served under the grant.

05 — Supporting Behavioral Health Providers in the Region

Lead by the Athens Wellbeing Project's Dr. Grace Bagwell-Adams, the coalition has collected and analyzed regional data from local behavioral health service providers about needs, barriers to access, and insights on the impact of COVID-19 on services.

Building Trauma Resources to Raise ACEs Awareness

To help establish a strong foundation of resources and community education about ACEs, the coalition created a trauma resources webpage, a community resource guide, and a PSA video featuring experts and people with lived experiences.

Convening and Growing
Strong Regional Partnerships

In preparing for the potential expansion of the grant into years 3 and 4, the coalition has leveraged new and existing relationships in the region to expand the future region of service through a developing partnership with Georgia Family Connection's Region 5.

Microgrants to Community
Organizations and Partners

The coalition has directed grant funds to local partner organizations who are working in juvenile justice and offender advocacy, two-generational approaches to homeless family support, TBRI training, and access to telehealth for behavioral health providers.

Overview of Efforts Related to Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition

In growing the collaborative efforts and deliverables achieved in the first year, the **Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition** has continued to offer a varied menu of online trainings and events to the community at large, focusing on expanding reach into the surrounding counties. Moving from the first year of the grant into the second, the coalition has engaged with nonprofit stakeholders, local agencies, and emerging partners working in youth-centered fields more heavily in an effort to expand the reach of the coalition and engage with more service providers who bring immense value to the initiatives being organized in the region.

In terms of existing partnerships, the research and data collection prowess of the **Athens Wellbeing Project** has been indispensable in identifying and addressing the most pressing needs in the community and aligning these efforts with the coalition's aims. **Envision Athens** has served as a key community partner in this work by leveraging the insights and connections of **HEALTHY Athens**, a taskforce of professionals working to align the private and public sectors to implement cross-sector trauma-informed care practices and policies. The **Athens Area Community Foundation** has championed the efforts of the Athens Wellbeing Project, served as a key liaison between the region and Resilient Georgia, and leveraged its network of nonprofit organizations to connect partners with training opportunities, resources, and trauma prevention and intervention services. The coalition has continued to leverage its close connection with the **University of Georgia'** faculty members, including **Dr. Grace Bagwell-Adams** and **Megan Bramlett, MPH** of the Athens Wellbeing Project, and **Dr. Diane Bales** and **Dr. Courtney Still-Brown**, certified trainers for the **Youth Mental Health First Aid** workshops.

Moving into potential future years of funding, the coalition aims to expand both their region of service and their partnerships with stakeholders in this region, using the strong foundation built in the first two years of funding as a springboard to bring more trauma awareness and trauma-informed care to the region. In preparing for these next steps, the existing coalition organizations have been pursuing a partnership with the **Family Connection** agencies in each of the twelve counties of region 5, effectively doubling the size of the region and the number of potential partners to engage with in the future.

The foundational body of work accomplished over the course of the past year is described categorically in the pages that follow. This report highlights the key initiatives spearheaded by this grant and the formative relationships that have been built between partners and stakeholders in the region over the past two years that will serve as a strong base of support for the anticipated expansion of this grant into further years.

Coalition Report: Prevention and Intervention

Film Screening Event

Over the summer, our coalition partnered with our local independent movie theater **Cinè** in their grant with **Science on the Screen** to several screenings of the film **Four Good Days**. To kick off the event, a private screening with a panel of subject matter experts from the region was held for local substance abuse, mental health, and juvenile justice service providers. Several public screenings were held after the initial private screening event to allow the community to watch the film and learn more about the complexities of the substance abuse prevention field through a trauma-informed lens.



This screening was an important opportunity to convene the substance abuse and mental health providers and agencies from the region for a discussion of how trauma impacts substance use and behavioral health outcomes. Following a year and a half of primarily virtual events, the Four Good Days screening was one of the first large, in-person events our coalition was able to hold as a grant deliverable. This was an important step for coalition morale and allowed partners to have meaningful, face-to-face conversations on trauma.

The screening event was also the first public viewing of our trauma-informed care PSA video, **Building a Trauma-Informed Region**. The Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition was able to use the event to launch the video, with our subject matter expert **Dr. Grace Bagwell Adams** of the **Athens Wellbeing Project** and the **UGA College of Public Health** leading the conversation about the link between trauma, adverse childhood experiences and substance abuse. See page 13 for more information about the PSA.

Coalition Report: Research and Data-Driven Initiatives

Behavioral Health Community Needs Assessment

The Athens Wellbeing Project has collected behavioral health provider indicator data to assess the provider-side behavioral health utilization, supply needs, and outcomes in the region. Using key secondary data points and reports from behavioral health providers, this report also assesses the way that COVID-19 has impacted behavioral health services in the region. This report has been shared with our partners and other key stakeholders in the region and provided the following key insights on the region:

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT



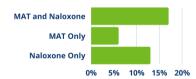
The percentage of behavioral health service providers who had to reduce, suspend, or discontinue regular services due to the effects of COVID-19



Prior to COVID-19, only 30% of providers were using telehealth. Currently, 77.5% of providers are using telehealth for client services, with 75.9% planning to continue doing so after the pandemic.



All survey respondents indicated that they had seen increased fear, anxiety, isolation, loneliness, depression, drug and alcohol use, and suicidal ideation among clients.



17% of organizations currently offer both naloxone and MAT (medication-assisted treatment), 6% offer MAT but not naloxone, and 13% offer naloxone but not MAT. 21% of those organizations not offering MAT were willing to start offering it in the future.



1 in 3 providers reported observing feelings of isolation, uncertainty, fear, and being overwhelmed among both their clients and employees.



The percentage of behavioral health service providers who have experienced a decrease in funding opportunities and ease since the beginning of COVID-19. 60% also reported an increase in operational expenses.









Future Outlook

Moving forward, we will be using this data to inform behavioral health provider support efforts including telehealth access, substance abuse prevention, and any general provider-side grants or areas of interests related to trauma-informed care (especially for behavioral health providers and TBRI grantees from **Bethel Haven**, **Inc.** and **Chosen for Life Ministries**).

Coalition Report: Trainings and Community Events

Training	Dates	Attendance
Community Resiliency Model: Introductory Sessions	April 13, 15, 20 2021 June 8, 9, 16 2021 August 5, 10, 12, 2021	April- 107 AttendeesJune- 60 AttendeesAugust- 38 Attendees
Community Resiliency Model: 3-hour Training Workshops	April 23rd, 2021 June 24th, 2021 August 25th, 2021	April- 16 AttendeesJune- 15 AttendeesAugust- 13 Attendees
Youth Mental Health First Aid: 6-hour Trainings	February 18th, 2021 March 31st, 2021 October 15th, 2021	February- 13 AttendeesMarch- 12 AttendeesOctober- 12 Attendees

Regional Trainings

Building on the training opportunities offered in the first year, the **Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition** has offered several training opportunities focused specifically on youth and community resiliency and ACEs prevention strategies over the past year. Informed by community data and the insights of partner organizations providing services in the region, the coalition has shifted its primary focus from introductory overviews of trauma and secondary stress to focus on trainings built for a community-centric, youth-focused approach. This approach has allowed the coalition to establish a strong foundation of information and menu of trainings that will serve as a basis for future trauma-informed initiatives in the region.

Building on the foundation of trainings from year one, the **Community Resiliency Model** and **Youth Mental Health First Aid** have become the predominant models offered throughout the region. The skills taught in these sessions are intended to be tangible, memorable, and replicable approaches to dealing with traumatic situations and are applicable at both an individual and interpersonal level.

Innovative Partnerships: Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)

TBRI Practitioner Training

Trust-Based Relational Intervention or TBRI is a model of therapy adapted to train caregivers in providing effective support and treatment for children who have been exposed to traumatic situations in childhood. The Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition partnered with Bethel Haven, Inc. and Chosen for Life Ministries to fund TBRI practitioner training through Restoration Rome for staff at each organization. Katie Deans, LPC, NCC, Staff Therapist at Bethel Haven, Jessi Williams, Director of Foster Care Support at Chosen for Life Ministries, and Kelly Brooks, Foster Care Program Coordinator at Chosen for Life Ministries all received practitioner training in TBRI through a grant from the Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition. Following their training and certification, we conducted follow-up interviews with all practitioners who were trained in TBRI and their executive directors to assess the impact and explore future opportunities arising from the training.



Innovative Partnerships: TBRI and Telehealth

An Opportunity for Continued Partnership

In year two, the **Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition** built upon relationships with service providers under the direction of the **Athens Wellbeing Project** to produce the **Behavioral Health Community Needs Assessment** report. This data-driven partnership has provided firsthand provider-side data on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic from providers across the region, including data on operations, finances, impact on clients, and telehealth needs. The results published in this report have allowed us to take action informed by the data collected and have led to an additional grant for telehealth support to **Bethel Haven, Inc.**, a local center providing therapeutic services and TBRI.

The coalition's success in this initiative is derived directly from the ability to collect, assess, and utilize representative local data points tied to provider side needs, supply needs, mental health outcomes, capacity, and gaps in service regionally. The data collected will be used by providers and agencies across the region for years to come, leading to more of the data-driven decision-making that has bolstered the coalition's efforts.

As a direct result of the TBRI provider trainings, the **Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition** has formed a strong relationship with these providers, with the potential to continue partnering on TBRI and telehealth initiatives in the future. In follow-up conversations, **Bethel Haven** and **Chosen for Life Ministries** have indicated an interest in forming their own TBRI training coalition, similar to the one in Rome, that can provide TBRI trainings to other clinicians and organizations in the region and work with families in need of trauma-informed clinical therapy.

Bethel Haven's TBRI practitioner, **Katie Deans**, has begun hosting TBRI caregiver trainings at other youth-centered non-profits and clinical organizations across the region, as well as providing TBRI sessions for clients at Bethel Haven. Additionally, this initial partnership, in tandem with the **Behavioral Health Community Needs Assessment**, brought additional focus to the lack of telehealth services for providers in the region and resulted in a second grant to Bethel Haven to support their TBRI practitioners and other staff clinicians who are working to become more trauma-informed in their approach to youth counseling.





Spotlight: Trauma-Informed Family Enrichment Program



Left to right: Olivia Amato, AAHS Community Engagement Coordinator; Meredith Lysaught, AACF Project Manager; Shea Post, AAHS Executive Director

In Fall 2021, the Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition partnered with the Athens Area Homeless Shelter to fund their Family Enrichment Program. This initiative, comprised of the Bridge to Home Program and the Almost Home Program, provides wraparound services, community programming, resiliency-building activities, and financial support for 14 families in transitional and emergency housing. The Bridge to Home Program provides childcare and two-generational enrichment opportunities to children and parents where at least one of the parents is pursuing a degree in a local technical college program. The Almost Home program is structured to provide support and trauma-sensitive services to families living in emergency shelters.

As a whole, the **Trauma-Informed Family Enrichment Program** has used data from the **Athens Wellbeing Project** and the **Athens Tech and Early Learning Report** to shape their homeless family support services to meet the greatest needs and provide the most impactful enrichment opportunities to families enrolled in the program. This data-driven, trauma-informed approach informed the initial collaboration between the coalition and the Athens Area Homeless Shelter and has since led to the formalization of several trauma-informed programs at AAHS.

Program Outcomes

- Comprehensive and collaborative case management
- Trauma-informed wrap-around services
- YMCA family memberships
- A summer reading program
- A structured on-site kids group
- On-site community tutors for parents and children
- Partnerships with community clubs, organizations, and extracurriculars
- Partnership with the Clarke County After-School Program

Inspired Action: Trauma Resources Webpage and PSA Video



About Giving Impact Contact

Trauma Resources

Check out our trauma PSA video here!

Content Overview

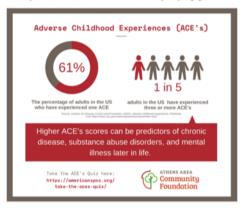
Here you will find a brief overview of the content that will be covered on this resource page. To navigate, click on the links below to view specific sections of this guide.

What is trauma?

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines trauma as an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that an individual experiences as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening and that have lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual wellbeing.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)

Adverse childhood experiences, or ACE's, refer to potentially traumatic experiences in childhood (between the ages of 0-17) that can have long-lasting impacts on feelings of wellbeing, safety, stability, and bonding in adulthood. ACE's can result from things like witnessing or experiencing violence, neglect, abuse, housing insecurity, food insecurity, and discrimination at home or in the community at a young age.



Trauma Webpage

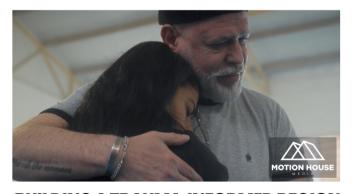
To address the lack of a consolidated landing page or group of trauma resources in the region, the **Athens Area Community Foundation** added a trauma resource landing page, a community resource guide, and menu of trainings on the community foundation's website as a central compendium of information. Using **Resilient Georgia**'s website as a guide, our trauma webpage was created as an informational tool and resource directory for our community and the region.

This resource has been cited and used by our partner agencies across the region, most recently by our 3-county **DECAL** collaborative group, and is intended to be an accessible guide to resources and information suited for partners, service providers, and individuals in the community. As a centralized landing page for trauma initiatives and information in the region at present, the resources and trainings listed here will serve as a key foundation for an expansion of the webpage and the resources housed here in the future as the coalition grows.

This resource, which is continually updated to reflect the most recent information about trauma and ACEs, can be accessed at https://athensareacf.org/impact/trauma-resources/

PSA Video

Working with Motion House Media, the coalition collected information from practitioners in related fields and testimonials from individuals who have experienced trauma to create an informational PSA about trauma. The video answers the questions "What is trauma?", "Who does it impact?", "Why is it important?", "What can I do if I have experienced trauma?", and "What can I do if someone I care about has experienced trauma?". Entitled Building a Trauma-Informed Region, the PSA represents the collaboration of the grant partners and key members of the community to create a tool for discussing trauma and is the culmination of our work in trauma over the first two years of this regional trauma-informed care grant.



BUILDING A TRAUMA-INFORMED REGION

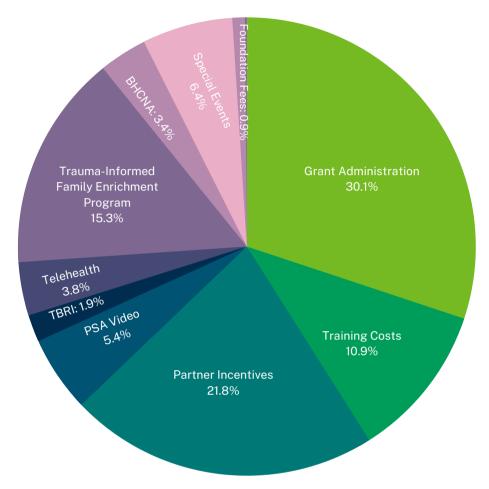
Watch the PSA now at https://athensareacf.org/impact/trauma-resources







Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition Financial Report: 2021



During the second year of the Resilient Georgia grant cycle, the Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition expanded its training offerings and increased its expenditures for trainings, training incentives, and training costs compared to year one. Administration costs increased with the inclusion of designated project managers and partner incentives were added to include funding directed towards the operations of the Family Connection agencies across the region in preparation for future funding opportunities. Programmatically, line items for TBRI, telehealth support, and a trauma-informed family enrichment program were included on this year's budget breakdown, reflecting the coalition's expanding relationships with service providers and agencies across the region. The Behavioral Health Community Needs Assessment (BHCNA) constituted 3.4% of the budget for the year, but had perhaps the largest return on investment, given the number of regional grant opportunities stemming from the data collected here. Lastly, the Special Events category covers the in-person events held by the coalition. This includes the film screening and panel event and the upcoming Rabbit book club planned for the beginning of year 3.

For a more in-depth summary of coalition expenses and financials, please see Addendum A.

\$130,893.93

Total expenditures for the Athens-Northeast Georgia Coalition in Year 2