



**RESILIENT
NORTHEAST
GEORGIA**

A Fund at the Athens Area Community Foundation



**ANNUAL
REPORT
2024**

RESILIENT GEORGIA
REGIONAL GRANTEE
ANNUAL REPORT

THE RESILIENT NORTHEAST
GEORGIA FUND AT THE ATHENS
AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION





RESILIENT NORTHEAST GEORGIA

A Fund at the Athens Area Community Foundation



GEORGIA
family connection
PARTNERSHIP



RESILIENT
NORTHEAST
GEORGIA

A Fund at the Athens Area Community Foundation

RESILIENT NORTHEAST GEORGIA PROUDLY WORKS ALONGSIDE LEADERS IN:

Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Greene, Jackson, Jasper, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, and Walton Counties

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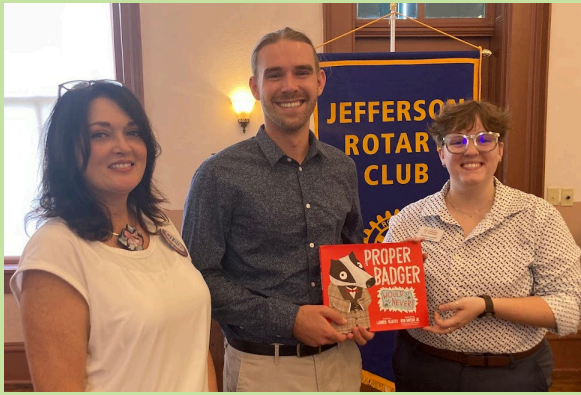
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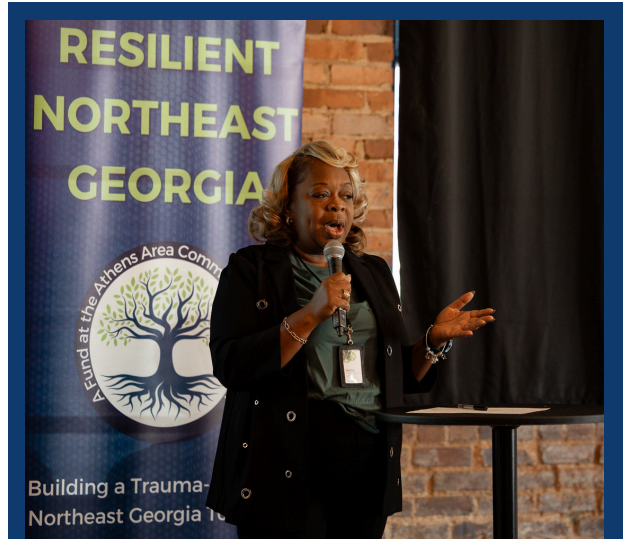
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AACF Staff with Holly McShane at Jefferson Rotary Club after a presentation on trauma-informed care. The club sponsored a book to donate in AACF's name to Jefferson City Schools.



Georgia Family Connection Partnership Regional Manager Sonya Hope leads a mindfulness journaling exercise at the Rise and Lead Summit.



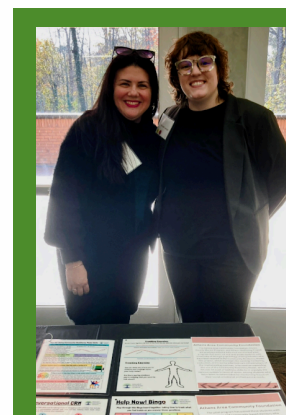
AACF Staff Members Sarah McKinney and Meredith Lysaught at Tim Johnson's retirement party. Tim served for 33 years as the first director of Family Connection - Communities in Schools of Athens.



Staff members from Casa de Amistad attending a Community Resiliency Model training held for all of AACF's Empty Stocking Fund grantees.



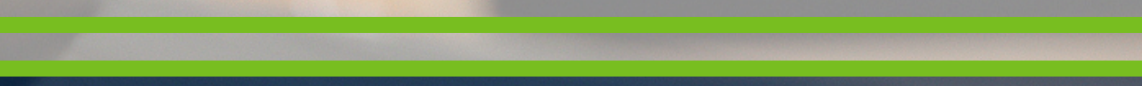
AACF Staff members and fellows at 15th Anniversary Brunch Bash Celebration in June 2024

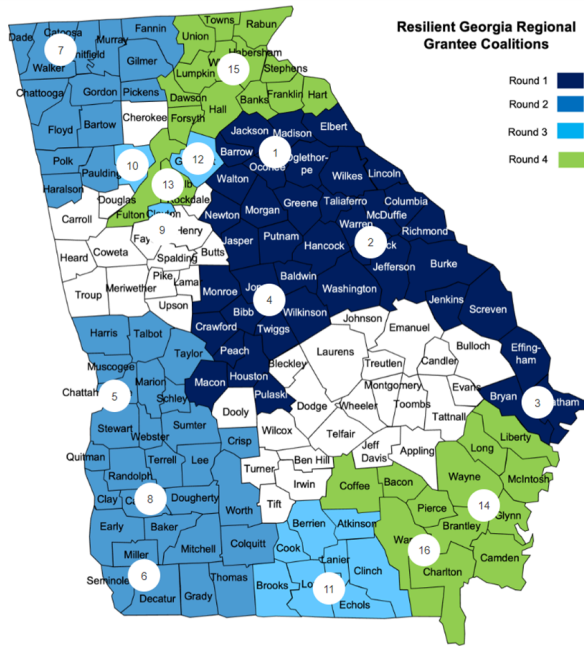


Dr. Grace Bagwell Adams and Meredith Lysaught present on trauma-informed mentor pilot at DECAL's Community Transformation Grant Showcase

SECTION ONE:

COALITION OVERVIEW





Resilient Georgia has been working with 16 regions across Georgia to provide an emphasis on trauma-informed awareness and care, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) prevention, 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 their 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 in 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. Round 4 funding was awarded in December 2021 to regional coalitions based out of Atlanta, Brunswick, Gainesville, and Waycross and the surrounding areas.

In their third and fourth years of partnership with Resilient Georgia, coalitions have bolstered their work to create bold, systemic, sustainable change in consistent ways across statewide issues, affect policy systems and environmental (PSE) change, and incorporated a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) lens in their action plans.

In their fifth and sixth years of partnership, coalitions were tasked with deepening their efforts to effectively engage partners across all regional counties, ensuring comprehensive representation and participation, particularly in under-resourced and historically-underserved areas.

Resilient Georgia Strategic Aims

- **Develop and Implement Coordinated Trauma-Informed Practices across Systems**
 - Implement trauma-informed practices and promote evidence-based practices to prevent ACEs and promote PCEs
- **Build a Common Language/Understanding about Adversity and Resiliency**
 - Communicate, promote, and implement a common language; convene, align, and expand existing training groups
- **Advocate and Partner to Drive Policy and Systems Change**
 - Engage with diverse stakeholders to promote policies that support community-informed sustainable systems change
- **Build Equitable Access to Early Prevention and Treatment**
 - Promote and expand equitable access in rural and under-resourced areas and ensure successful participation and intentional engagement with every county in the region





Resilient Northeast Georgia is a strategic, sustainable, and specialized collaboration that exists as a partnership between the Athens Area Community Foundation, Georgia Family Connection Partnership Region 5, and the Athens Wellbeing Project. Administered by the Athens Area Community Foundation, Resilient Northeast Georgia comes alongside partners in northeast Georgia to promote the prevention and mitigation of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and to champion Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) in the creation of a trauma-informed behavioral health continuum of care for the birth-to-26 community in Georgia.

We are dedicated to building a stronger, healthier community by advocating for trauma-informed systems and practices. We believe that addressing trauma is essential for the wellbeing of our region and we are committed to raising awareness, fostering collaboration, and driving change to ensure that every individual in northeast Georgia has access to the care and support they need. Through authentic collaboration, we believe that creating a trauma-informed community is a priority and a tangible reality.



Strategic Action Areas

- 1. **Build brand-awareness** with a multi-pronged media and promotions strategy
- 2. **Grow and sustain relationships** with Family Connection Partnership Region 5 leaders
- 3. **Expand into new sectors** with strategic partnerships, starting with key medical and business partners in the region



Target Populations

To drive effective and sustainable change for the birth-to-26 population, Resilient Northeast Georgia works with local and regional providers, organizations, and individuals across all sectors of the community. In 2023, the coalition focused on growing resiliency-infused leadership across the region through partnership creation and development efforts.



Major Partners

The Resilient Northeast Georgia coalition is spearheaded by the Athens Area Community Foundation and operates regionally in partnership with Georgia Family Connection Partnership in Region 5, which has an established presence in each of our 12 counties.



Key Outcomes

In 2024, Resilient Northeast Georgia ratified a formal strategic plan, expanded partnerships within the business and medical sectors, and strengthened its existing partnership with regional Family Connection collaboratives. The coalition also hosted its third annual summit and executed a marketing RFP.



YEAR 5 COALITION TIMELINE

Start of FC Seed Grants

Family Connection partners applied for funding for 12 unique seed grant programs.

1

DECEMBER
2023

JANUARY
2024

2

Start of Strategic Planning

Key stakeholders convened for a facilitated strategic planning day, formalizing the annual plan.

FC Plan Preview Days

RNEGA program manager joined GAFCP Leadership to audit region's strategic plans.

3

FEBRUARY
2024

MARCH
2024

4

Piedmont Residency CRM

Medical residents were trained in CRM to support their personal resiliency and patient-facing skills.

Rotary Club Presentations

AACF staff started a tour of presentations on RNEGA-AACF for local Rotary Clubs.

5

APRIL
2024

MAY
2024

6

Awareness Campaign RFP

The search for a marketing team began with an RFP process and an audit of brand awareness goals.

YEAR 5 COALITION TIMELINE

Mentor Georgia CRM

Dual sessions of CRM were presented to statewide adult and teen summit attendees.

7

JUNE
2024

JULY
2024

8

Coordinator On-Boarding

Several new Family Connection coordinators began their roles around the region.

RG Peer to Peer Launch

RNEGA worked with statewide partners to start a monthly peer support meeting for RG grantees.

9

AUGUST
2024

SEPTEMBER
2024

10

Rise and Lead Summit

Regional partners convened for sessions focused on mental health, self-care, and resiliency.

Workplace Wellness Pilot

A new partnership brought two employee wellness sessions on CRM and mindfulness.

11

OCTOBER
2024

NOVEMBER
2024

12

Grant Cycle Exploration

In preparation for 2025 cycle, the coalition explored logistics for a regional grant program.

COALITION LEADERS AND PARTNERS

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Sarah McKinney

President and CEO, Athens Area Community Foundation

Meredith Lysaught

Program Manager, Athens Area Community Foundation

Stephanie Mann

V.P. of Strategy and Operations, Athens Area Community Foundation

Sonya Hope

Regional Manager, Georgia Family Connection Partnership

Dr. Grace Bagwell Adams

Principal Investigator, Athens Wellbeing Project

Athens Area Community Foundation Staff and Board of Directors

Destin Newfont, Nicole Washington, Alicia Battle, Amy BeMent, David Bradley, Clark Brown, Kevin Clark, Sally Coenen, Maurice Daniels, Myron Downs, Jennifer Frum, Patrick Garrard, Mayor Kelly Girtz, Bevan Hopper, Tim Johnson, Heidi Hensley, Rhodes McLanahan, Teresa McLean, Jody Patton, Erin Thompson Podvin, Sara Schramm, Kirk Smith, Roy Stowe, Laura Welch, Steve Wrigley.

COALITION PARTNERS AND CONTACTS 2024

Family Connection Partners

Amanda Davis, Oconee Area Resource Council

Sherry Deakin, Madison Area Resource Team

Laura Evans, Community Partnership of Elbert County

Targie Folds, Jasper County and Greene County Family Connections

Aaryn Fisher, Jackson County Family Connection Council

Velde Hardy, Morgan County Family Connection

Dena Huff, The Partnership for Children, Youth, and Families

Erin Thompson-Podvin, Family Connection-Communities in Schools of Athens

April Moore, Oglethorpe County Family Connection

Amy Keibler, Barrow County Family Connection

Academic Partners

Rebecca Baskam, Athens Wellbeing Project Team and UGA

Dr. Katie Ehrlich, University of Georgia School of Psychology

Dr. Diane Bales, UGA Family and Consumer Sciences

Tessa Barbazon, Clarke County School District

Allyn Carey, Clarke County School District

Veronica Johnson, Clarke County School District

Leslie Hale, UGA Fanning Institute, Mentor Georgia

Nonprofit Partners

Tishia Fenn, Walton Youth Project

Alison Rosch and Spring Turner, Clarke County Mentor Program

Elliott Tranter and Tamlin Hall, Hope Givers

Drs. David and Patti Bradley, Maggie Combs, The Spencer Bradley Foundation for Mental Health

Kay Keller and Courtney Etheredge, United Way of Northeast Georgia

Kamesha Walker, Gwinnett Coalition

Youth and Youth-Serving Organizations

The Walton Youth Project Teen Advisory Board

Business Sector Partners

District 6910 Rotary Club Partners

Janay Boyer and Jenn Sapp, See. Spark. Go. Marketing
Amy Kissane, Better Communities Collaborative

Healthcare Providers

Dr. Catherine Apaloo and Dr. Zahraa Rabeeah, Piedmont Athens Regional Graduate Medical Education Department

Steven Dasher, Piedmont Athens Regional Foundation

Juvenile Justice

Judge Sherry Moore, Jackson County Probate Court; Jackson County Mental Health Taskforce

Judge Amanda Trimble, Athens-Clarke County Juvenile Court; FC-CIS Safety and Community Stability Strategic Action Team Chair; THRIV Infant-Toddler Court

Summit and Special Event Speakers

Tra Battle, Battle Solutions LLC

A Child's Voice Child Advocacy Center

Chaplain Dale Simmons, Chaplain's 1013

Dr. Folami Prescott Adams, HTI Catalysts

Johnelle Simpson, Simpson Says

Public Sector Partners

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)

Resilient Northeast Georgia Donors

The Alice and Noah N. Langdale, Jr. Foundation

The Pittulloch Foundation

Other Partners

The multitude of participants who attended our trainings or connected with us through their local Family Connection Collaborative. They represent a multitude of organizations in Northeast Georgia and beyond.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

In reflection, I am filled with gratitude for the dedication and commitment of partners and community members who have worked alongside us in growing the Resilient Northeast Georgia program. Collectively, we have made remarkable strides in addressing trauma within our community, and it is inspiring to see the outcomes of our efforts.

Looking ahead, I am excited to share our newly developed strategic plan that will guide our work. Finalized in 2024, this plan isn't just a roadmap; it's a call to action that will guide our efforts to build a trauma-informed northeast Georgia.



Our plan includes 3 key action areas:

- 1. An awareness campaign to increase knowledge of trauma.** Through shared messaging, aimed to educate our community, we will cultivate understanding and compassion, fostering a supportive environment where every individual in Northeast Georgia has access to the support and care they need. Imagine a community where everyone is equipped to recognize and respond to trauma—this is within our reach!
- 2. Continued partnerships with local Family Connections.** By enhancing their capacity with additional resources and support, we will amplify their efforts and enhance the vital services they offer to families in need. Together, we will build a more resilient community that supports every individual and family!
- 3. Expanded partnerships into new sectors of our regional community.** Through collaboration with new partners in the health services and business sectors, we will embed trauma-informed trainings and resources in organizations around the region. Envision how organizations will change the way they interact with their clients with this new lens of trauma-informed care!

In this exciting annual report, you will read about our community leadership through the advocacy, programming, training, and coalition-building efforts of Resilient Northeast Georgia. Every initiative has grown out of and been sustained by collaborative efforts with local partners. Every achievement over the past five years has been rooted in Resilient Georgia's commitment to our region. This trust has supported collaborative efforts that are with, for, and by community, by design.

As we embark on our strategic plan, I invite you to join the journey of growth and transformation. Your contributions are invaluable, and make a lasting impact. Together, I believe that we can transform our community into a place of healing and hope.

On behalf of our partners and community, thank you for being such an essential part of Resilient Northeast Georgia.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah McKinney".

Sarah McKinney
President | CEO, Athens Area Community Foundation



ATHENS AREA
**Community
Foundation**



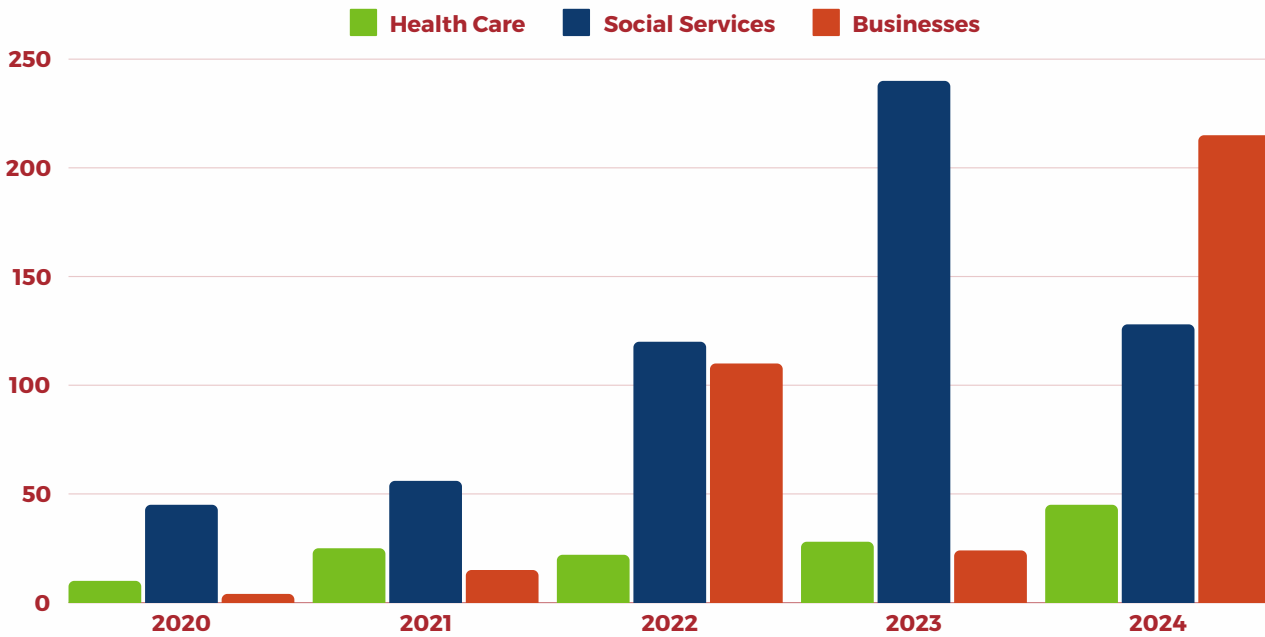


WHERE DID RESILIENT NORTHEAST GEORGIA SHOW UP IN 2024?

In 2024, Resilient Northeast Georgia has continued to engage more sectors of the community in trainings and coalition events. Guided by the Resilient Georgia training roadmap, we're continuing to come alongside our Family Connection partners to intentionally connect with the most vital sectors for partnership in each of our counties.

A key part of our 2024 strategic plan was to further expand our engagement in two new sectors: healthcare providers and the business community. Through a partnership with Piedmont Athens Regional Hospital System, Resilient Northeast Georgia successfully piloted a Community Resiliency Model training supplement with medical residents in the community clinic.

To reach the regional business community, RNEGA also toured with local Rotary Clubs to present a Trauma 101 pitch deck and connect members back to the Athens Area Community Foundation. We've also partnered with United Way of Northeast Georgia and several local businesses to connect partners to trainings and events that increase employee resiliency.



Over the past five years, the Resilient Northeast Georgia coalition has experienced significant increases in sector diversity in engagement. The chart above shows point-in-time counts following significant events and engagement opportunities across the three key sectors of interest outlined in the 2024-2025 strategic plan.

Grant initiatives and general attendance in 2020 and 2021 was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Paired with the newness of the initiative and a smaller geographic region of influence, overall engagement was lower and less diverse in these years. Initiatives in 2022 mark the first full year of the partnership with Georgia Family Connection and provided connections to a wider regional audience, increasing attendance across all sectors of the roadmap. With a larger, youth-focused regional summit and a variety of nonprofit partner connections, 2023 saw a disproportionate increase in engagement from the social services sector and a diminishment in direct engagement from the business sector.

In 2024, our strategic plan honed the coalition’s focus to influence strategic growth with new partnerships. With an ongoing partnership with Family Connection and new connections with healthcare and business partners, the RNEGA coalition has prioritized efforts in these sectors for the 2024-2025 grant cycle.



AACF President | CEO Sarah McKinney talking to medical residents in Piedmont Athens Regional's Graduate Medical Education Program at a CRM Training, March 2024

RESILIENT NORTHEAST GEORGIA COALITION BY THE NUMBERS, 2020-2024

3,862 Total Participants Engaged
in trainings and events



9,475 Contact Hours Earned from
participants around the region



62 Events and Trainings Delivered
through local partnerships



12 Counties Reached by Resilient
Northeast Georgia Grant Initiatives



IN 2024, RESILIENT NORTHEAST GEORGIA REACHED:

151

Rotary Club
Members

65

Summit
Attendees

25

Medical
Residents

381

CRM Trainees
Regionally

210

Students
through
Hope Givers

267

Attendees at
Partner-Led
Events

45

Employees at
Workplace
Trainings

155

Attendees at
Regional
Special Events

1,084

Partners Reached

23

Regional Events

1,123

Contact Hours

SECTION TWO:

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

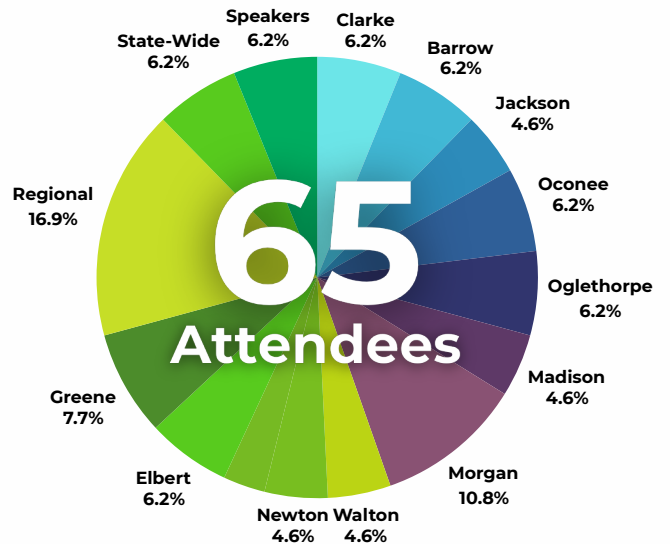




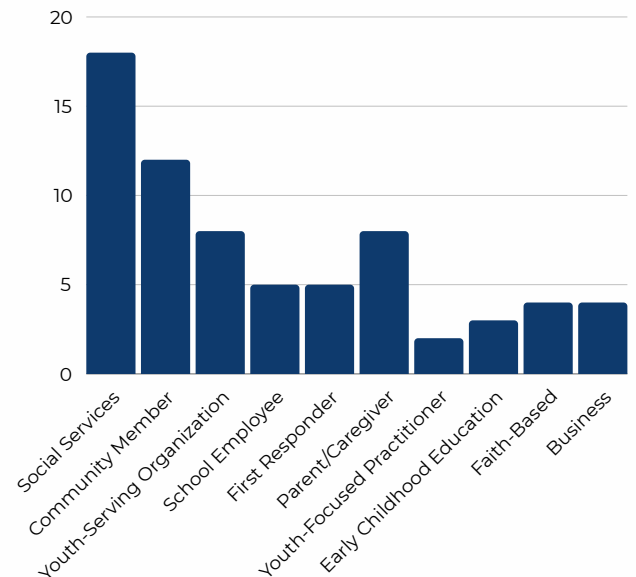
In October, Resilient Northeast Georgia connected with 65 regional leaders from around the region for the *Rise and Lead: Resiliency-Infused Leadership Summit*. Hosted alongside our partners at Georgia Family Connection Partnership Region 5, the summit brought together leaders for a day of professional development on implementing self-care practices, facilitating difficult conversations, and creating more sustainable, trauma-informed systems.

The day was filled with thought-provoking discussions and presentations that explored how mental health plays a crucial role in building strong, resilient leadership through the lens of professional development. As speakers, Johnelle Simpson, Chaplain Dale Simmons, and Dr. Folami Prescott-Adams shared strategies for managing stress, avoiding burnout, supporting first responders, and cultivating emotional intelligence -all skills that are vital when leading teams through challenging and high-stakes work.

Attendance by County



Sector Representation



Participant Survey Feedback



100%

felt uplifted and inspired after the summit



96%

left with a better understanding of resiliency



91%

had tangible next steps to support their wellbeing



100%

felt a deeper connection to the regional community



Analysis of the feedback provided by participants showed the following trends in most-mentioned outcomes seen by attendees. The data, shown below, reveals a strong desire for practical self-care strategies, effective communication and collaboration tools, trauma-informed approaches, and inspiring leadership to promote and build resiliency in communities.

As we continue our collective journey toward a more resilient future, the Rise and Lead summit highlighted one key takeaway: leadership rooted in mental health and emotional resilience is the foundation of lasting change.



LEADERSHIP IN ACTION



Top: Mentor GA Teen Summit Wall of Encouragements.
Left to Right: Johnelle Simpson speaking at RNEGA Rise and Lead Summit; Piedmont Residents at CRM Training Pilot; AACF Staff Destin Newfont and Meredith Lysaught with Elbert County Rotary Club



Left to Right: AACF Fellow Fiona Cashin hosting resiliency table; AACF staff reading to students at Walton Mind and Muscle Merge; OARC partners tabling at RNEGA Summit
Bottom: Students at Madison County High School Hope Givers school rally.





Top: Regional partners at a networking session, Rise and Lead Summit



Left to Right: Madison County partners networking at RNEGA summit; Walton County counselor receiving school-based resiliency kit; Young Leaders affinity group at RNEGA Summit.

Left to Right: Morgan County partners at RNEGA summit; Tim Johnson and Linda Foster at GAFCP Retirement Lunch; AACF Staff and partners at the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia's opening event.
Bottom: Attendees at RNEGA summit listening to Chaplain Dale Simmons' session.





Since partnering in October 2021, the coordinators of the regional Family Connection collaboratives have been a central and indispensable part of Resilient Northeast Georgia. As the lead implementing partners on the ground in each county, their collaboratives are on the forefront of planning and executing trainings and events around the region.

The coordinators and collaboratives also play a key role in guiding the coalition’s direction, providing input through formal listening sessions and sharing their insights into community needs back as part of the planning process. Each county has implemented standard language around trauma-informed care into their annual operating plans, providing a regional baseline for the initiative as it plays

Key Indicator	Activity / Project	Data / Outcome
Onboard 100% FC Executive Directors into RNEGA work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host Fall 2024 mini-conference for regional directors • Convene at annual FC state conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By end of 2024, onboard all new FC coordinators. • Revitalize county clusters with all new leadership.
Prioritize the use of the training roadmap as a menu of what to fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct end of year listening sessions with FC Coordinators. • Increase resources for roadmap trainings • Increase funding for Family Connection with annual plans as it relates to RNEGA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One to two CRM trainers (or other training modalities) embedded in each county • Cluster training support • Leverage listening session findings to acquire match funding • Continue Seed grants and initiate matches for seed grants, getting at least 25% of counties with matches
Provide JEDI-focused opportunities for FC counties and region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-design JEDI strategies for regional FC partners with Sonya Hope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support FC implementation of REI task force strategies into all RNEGA county partnerships. • Deliver training to all FC coordinators on facilitating and holding difficult conversations • Evaluate implementation of these strategies in Y5 and Y6.



Sonya Hope

*Georgia Family Connection
Region Five Manager*

"Through our collaborative efforts with RNEGA, we have significantly increased trauma awareness and resilience within our region. Fostering partnerships, providing education, and building trust, we have empowered individuals and organizations to recognize the effects of trauma and respond with compassion. This collective action has not only raised awareness but also strengthened the capacity of our community to build resilience, promoting healing and long-term well-being for all members."



Amanda Davis

Oconee Area Resource Council

"I am thankful for the support from the Athens Area Community Foundation in engaging with all of us in Region 5. It is so encouraging to receive support through multiple trainings, conversations, and financially through the seed grant to focus on a specific area in our county. Oconee County has been able to attend a mini-conference on the Handle with Care program and hope to be able to implement this great program in the next year as we continue to gather information and support from the pivotal people in leadership."



Velde Hardy

Morgan County Family Connection

"It has been a very rewarding experience working alongside Resilient Northeast Georgia over the past three years. As a result of this partnership our community has been able to expand the number of persons who are trauma informed, including a one-day child abuse prevention conference this year. This collaboration with Resilient Northeast Georgia is truly exciting as together we continue to provide the exposure and resources to increase awareness as we move forward with becoming a trauma-informed county."



Dena Huff

The Partnership for Children, Families, and Youth (Walton County)

"The collaboration between AACF, The Partnership and Walton Youth Project has allowed our Walton Teen Advocacy Board to build initiatives they could only wish for without our partnerships. We were able to host a Day Retreat, Mind and Muscle Murge; and create a Community Resilience Alley Garden. We have been given opportunities that would not exist without this partnership. Meredith has been a tremendous asset to this partnership and we are grateful for her guidance and leadership. We look forward to our continued partnership and work with Resilient Northeast Georgia."



Laura Evans

Community Partnership of Elbert County

"I continue to feel the energy and enthusiasm within the Resilient Northeast Georgia partnership! Working together, we have been able to accomplish so much more than we were individually. Unifying as the Resilient Northeast Georgia coalition gives definition and substance to the work we have all done alone for so many years."



Sherry Deakin

Madison Area Resource Team

"Having the opportunity to partner with Resilient Northeast Georgia has been such a rewarding relationship; on both a professional and personal level. The staff graciously supported the work of our collaborative, and supported me personally through one of the most challenging times of my life."



April Moore

Oglethorpe County Family Connection

"We have truly been "blessed with the best" in Region 5 with our partnership with RNEGA. We are super thankful for the seed grant funding that supports local needs in our sweet community. We can feel, see, and experience the changes through this partnership, and it's such an amazing feeling. People are more comfortable talking about mental health issues without stigma and we've been able to expand collaborative involvement in trainings. We are learning and growing better together!"



Targie Folds

Jasper and Greene County Family Connections

"In Jasper County, our partnership with the Athens Area Community Foundation has added more resources to our small community. Without this partnership, we would not have the tools to assist us with improving our resiliency, preventing childhood trauma, and understanding how we can support those who have experienced trauma. We are so grateful as a community for this continued partnership!"

WELCOMING NEW FACES

We asked our newest coordinators what they were most excited to achieve after starting this partnership.



Erin Thompson Podvin

Family Connection-Communities in Schools of Athens

- Provide training and education on trauma
- Foster cross-sector partnerships to create a more coordinated approach
- Engage those who have experienced trauma in advocacy, awareness, planning and implementation activities to ensure their voices are heard.



Aaryn Fisher

Jackson County Family Connection

- Provide new resources to families and the community
- Overcome barriers to trauma informed care access
- Bring tools and trainings on trauma prevention



Aimee Keibler

Barrow County Family Connection

- Provide support and healing after Apalachee school shooting
- Strengthen support systems for families in need to build resilience
- Promote collaboration to create long-term solutions to trauma
- Improve child wellbeing outcomes

In Greene County, this opportunity has blessed our local school systems with resources that the school social workers have used to assist teachers and students to be better equipped to handle stressors. Resourcing around the Community Resiliency Model (CRM) has allowed our school community to take charge of overall wellbeing in and outside of the classroom. Our collaborative could not be more grateful and more excited to be able to offer this to our teachers and students."





Top: Community garden space and revitalized dumpster created by Walton Youth Project teen advisory board with RNEGA seed grant funds. Middle: Community partners tabling with mental and physical health resources at Jackson County's Teen Rock the Block.



Bottom: Participants at Morgan County's Prevent Child Abuse Month Conference participating in a Connections Matter training session, led by leadership from Prevent Child Abuse Georgia. The conference provided advocacy training for adults working with kids.



SECTION THREE:

NEW PARTNERSHIPS, NEW DIRECTIONS



SETTING THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The first step to growing RNEGA is building the awareness of trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and the role of resilience across Northeast Georgia. The second step is making it clear how communities and individuals can engage with the coalition. Internal production of written materials and assets are one component, but the next phase of programming must include a professional informational campaign launched in Year 5, and leveraging all partners and stakeholders to engage in collaborative storytelling efforts.

Key Indicator	Activity / Project	Data / Outcome
Execute a successful region-wide brand awareness campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine theme for marketing campaign (social isolation, mental health, wellbeing, etc). Retain a PR/Marketing firm to design the campaign. Launch campaign by Q4, Year Five. Develop evergreen assets for RNEGA coalition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase knowledge of trauma-informed care across all 12 counties of the region. Increase SEO for RNEGA website. Measurable increases in information engagement for all emails, newsletters, web content.
Leverage Family Connection (FC) coordinators for local storytelling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a branded toolkit with assets to share across FC county audiences. Collaborate on storytelling assets for web and print regarding local coalition efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of short films describing county and coalition partnership impact and efforts. Increase collaborative posts and writing for local and state outlets covering programming efforts. Increase earned media by 10% annually.
Increase region and state-wide knowledge of RNEGA and its impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and share assets across sectors and audiences to increase knowledge of ACEs, and resilience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase community knowledge of ACEs and resilience using RG Concept Cards and Training Roadmap. Increase regional knowledge of evidence-based tools to address and prevent ACEs.

NEXT STEPS: CAMPAIGN ROLL-OUT (2025)



Execute RFP and select a marketing firm for partnership.



Set monthly metrics for growth and reach with marketing firm.



Audit social media and resources, create communications playbook.



Create print, film, and digital collateral for regional use.



Create and share collaborative social content from AACF platforms.



CONTENT PILLARS

- EDUCATE - 50%**
– Informative resources about our coalition, mission, data-driven purpose, events and more
- AMPLIFY - 30%**
– Content that platforms our partners and their connection to our mission
– Community posts about local opportunities to get involved
- CELEBRATE - 20%**
– Acknowledgments of milestones, partner wins, coalition improvements and more

KEY MESSAGES

- 1** We believe that trauma education is essential for the wellbeing of the region.
- 2** We are committed to raising awareness and driving change to ensure that every individual in Northeast Georgia has access to the support and care they need.
- 3** True, authentic collaboration among our community is the only way to facilitate change.

KEY DELIVERABLES

-  **Trauma 101 Pitch Deck** to present to regional partners across sectors
-  **Leave-Behind Brochure** to highlight the coalition, our role, and our partners
-  **Communications Playbook** based on a comprehensive audit and partner interviews

YEAR FIVE REGIONAL SEED GRANT ANALYSIS OF REPORTED OUTCOMES

In November 2023, Resilient Northeast Georgia provided a \$4,000 seed grant to each of the 12 Family Connection collaboratives in the region. Each county submitted a proposal to receive the funds and data was collected after a full year of planning and implementation to assess the efficacy, alignment, and outcomes of these seed grants in the region. Due to changes in leadership, there were changes made to several of the seed grants that diverged from the original proposal. For incoming leadership, Resilient Northeast Georgia is providing additional technical assistance to ensure completion of the revised programming.

The overarching analysis of the collected seed grant reports are compiled below.

ALIGNMENT TO RESILIENT GEORGIA'S STRATEGIC AIMS WAS REQUIRED. THESE AIMS WERE MOST OFTEN SELECTED:



CROSS-SECTOR TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES



EVIDENCE-BASED PREVENTION WITH A COMMON LANGUAGE



ENGAGE COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND EXPAND RESOURCES

← **WHAT KEY OUTCOMES DID PARTNERS AIM FOR WITH PROGRAMS?**

WHAT THEMES EMERGED THROUGH EVALUATION? →

PROGRAMS FULLY IMPLEMENTED IN 2024:

1. **Child Abuse Prevention Month Mini-Conference:** An event focused on stories of resiliency and a Connections Matter training session to community members.
2. **Mind and Muscle Merge After-School Events:** An after-school program, developed and led by teens, to improve mental and physical health outcomes.
3. **A Community Resiliency Garden:** A community space with mental health resources available for any member of the community to utilize free of charge.
4. **Website Re-Design and Resource Creation:** A local collaborative's website was updated and modernized, with the addition of new community resource collateral.
5. **Community Resiliency Model Train-the-Trainer:** Funding for local leaders to become CRM trainer certified to improve county capacity to deliver trainings.

WHAT OUTCOMES DID IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS SEE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES?

Improved Regional and County-Level Collaboration

New initiatives fostered a stronger peer-to-peer support structure, especially for partners working on similar programs. These grants also resulted in more collaboration with county partners to improve the roll-out of the seed grant initiatives.

Increased Capacity for Action

Beyond providing funding, these seed grants provided enhanced connections to resources, train-the-trainer opportunities, and awareness for county partners during implementation.

Enhanced Focus on Sustainability

Designing and implementing signature initiatives served to empower, encourage, and celebrate partner achievements and leadership, building confidence and capacity for action.

- Implement Trauma-Informed Practices (A3)
- Promote Evidence-Based ACEs Prevention and Foster Positive Childhood Experiences (A4)
- Promote Elements of a Common Language (C1)
- Partner with Diverse Stakeholders to Drive a Sustainable Policy Agenda Informed by the Community (D2)
- Ensure Equitable and Intentional Engagement with Local Partners in All Counties and with Rural Communities (E1)



INCREASED AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE

All programs saw an increase in awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the importance of trauma-informed care among participants.



BETTER ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Most programs provided trainings, materials, and connections to existing services and organizations that can offer assistance and guidance.



ENHANCED COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS

All programs reflected deep understanding of the importance of cross-sector partnerships and were able to coordinate with new partners.



IMPROVED TRAININGS AND SKILLS DEVELOPED

Many programs brought specific, evidence-based trainings to their communities for the first time through this grant opportunity, focused on skill-building outcomes.



STRONGER FOCUS ON RESILIENCE AND WELLBEING

The proposed programs were creative in scope, demonstrating deeper understanding of community resiliency by the leaders who wrote the applications.

PROGRAMS PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED IN 2024:

- 1. Support for a Local Mental Health Taskforce:** Funds were used to start a community needs assessment process and support the development of resource materials.
- 2. Handle with Care Implementation:** Many counties began the process of contacting partners for Handle with Care and attended the statewide conference in Savannah.
- 3. First Responder Wellbeing Supports:** Several counties impacted by critical incidents chose to re-direct efforts towards supports, trainings, and self-care for first responders.
- 4. Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainings for Schools:** Partners reported barriers in scheduling dates with school staff and are continuing to focus on new trainings.
- 5. Program for Students Experiencing Trauma:** Care kits were provided to students who were experiencing the loss of a family member, with ongoing expansion efforts.

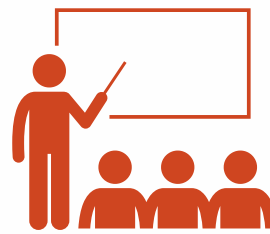


The Community Transformation Grant (CTG) initiative, was a collaborative project between the Athens Area Community Foundation’s Resilient Northeast Georgia Grant, the Athens Wellbeing Project, the Clarke County Mentor Program, and the Clarke County School District. This 18-month initiative, spanning from January 2023 to June 2024, directly aligned with RNEGA's goals of building community resilience by addressing the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) through trauma-informed practices. The program paired 50 mentors, trained in the Community Resilience Model (CRM), with elementary-aged children (ages 5-8) in Clarke County and also provided CRM training to 103 additional individuals, including mentors, school counselors, and parents. This multi-faceted approach aimed to improve the social-emotional and behavioral well-being of these children.

Key Grant Outcomes



50 1st and 2nd Grade Students Matched with CRM-Trained Mentors



103 Mentors, Caregivers, and Community Members were Trained in CRM



200% increase in CCSD Elementary Schools with K-2 Mentor Pairs (from 4 to 12 schools)



80% of Mentors Trained Reported Consistently Using CRM Skills While Mentoring

Key Findings	Outcomes of the Trauma-Informed Mentorship Pilot Program
Improved Mentor Preparedness	Mentors receiving CRM training felt significantly more prepared for their roles than those without CRM training. Over 80% consistently used CRM skills in mentor-mentee interactions.
Increased Mentoring Reach	The CTG significantly expanded the Clarke County Mentor Program's reach, increasing its presence within young elementary student grades from 35% to 86% of elementary schools in Clarke County.
Addressing Disparities	The program specifically targeted young children (ages 5-8), especially in Kindergarten and First Grade, who are disproportionately underserved in mentoring services within Clarke County.
Sustainable Training Capacity	Eight individuals have been trained as CRM Trainers, ensuring the program's sustainability beyond the grant period. These individuals can now train future mentors and community partners.
Positive Outcomes for Mentees	Mentors observed positive changes in mentees' behavior, including improved focus, reduced outbursts, and a calmer demeanor. Strong mentor-mentee relationships were also fostered.
High Retention Rates	The program boasts impressively high retention rates for both mentors and mentees, exceeding expectations, particularly given the high proportion of college student mentors.
CRM Training: Strengths & Limitations	The CRM framework was helpful initially, but worksheets were not engaging for younger children. The report recommends age-specific training and a shift towards conversation-based approaches as the leaders of the Clarke County Mentor Program continue to implement the framework.
Training Gaps Identified	A need for training on social media impact, emotional regulation, cultural sensitivity, and addressing untruthfulness in young children was identified by mentors in the training cohort.

Growing the Impact of the Pilot Program

As a result of the efficacy of this pilot program, Resilient Northeast Georgia's program manager was invited to present a session of the Community Resiliency Model at Mentor Georgia's annual summit. In the community member summit session, details about the Community Transformation Grant pilot were shared with organizations from across the state. At the teen summit, 75 middle and high school students in attendance were invited to participate in learning and practicing some of the core CRM skills together.





Key Indicator	Activity / Project	Data / Outcome
<p>Expand into health services & medical sectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forge formal partnerships with hospital systems, Advantage Behavioral Health, and Medlink. • Deliver CRM trainings to medical residents & practicing clinicians. • Create pipeline for CEUs for health services sector for all trainings offered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train annual cohort of medical residents in CRM. • Integrate formal CRM and other trainings across all partners in medical sector. • Deliver annual CEU events for practicing clinicians.
<p>Expand into business sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate partnership with United Way of Northeast Georgia (UWNEGA), civic groups, and chambers. • Create and deliver onboarding presentation to engage all Rotary organizations in the service area. • Replicate and tailor presentation for Chambers of Commerce across service area. • Develop toolkits for business or civic organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Trauma 101 pitch deck specific to businesses. • By end of year six, connect with Rotary organizations in 100% of service area counties. • By end of year six, connect and deliver content to 100% of service area chambers of commerce. • Create one-pager with specific and tangible ways for business sector to become trauma informed organizations.
<p>Resource partners to apply for their own sources of funding using RNEGA data, evaluation, and match incentives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene philanthropic partners (leveraging AACF's strategic philanthropy committee) to strategize on building a pipeline for community-level empowerment and long term funding of RNEGA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a long term strategy for funding using data, evaluation, and external funding. • Create and implement match incentives for seed grants across partners and sectors.

SECTION FOUR:

EVALUATION AND RESEARCH



SUMMIT SPOTLIGHT TEEN LEADERSHIP

245
Total Attendees

12
Community Organizations

100
Participating Teams

18
Community Organizations



As a summit planned by, for, and with teens, INFORM and its partners leveraged a remarkable level of talent and expertise from across the region served by our strategic initiative, presented in the INFORM and INFORM-Action. As a whole, the summit put a spotlight on the role of improving community resilience through collaboration with other groups. The summit was a learning and collaboration opportunity for all levels of teens and adults.

SESSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

I learned something new from the INFORM Summit.

I felt inspired.

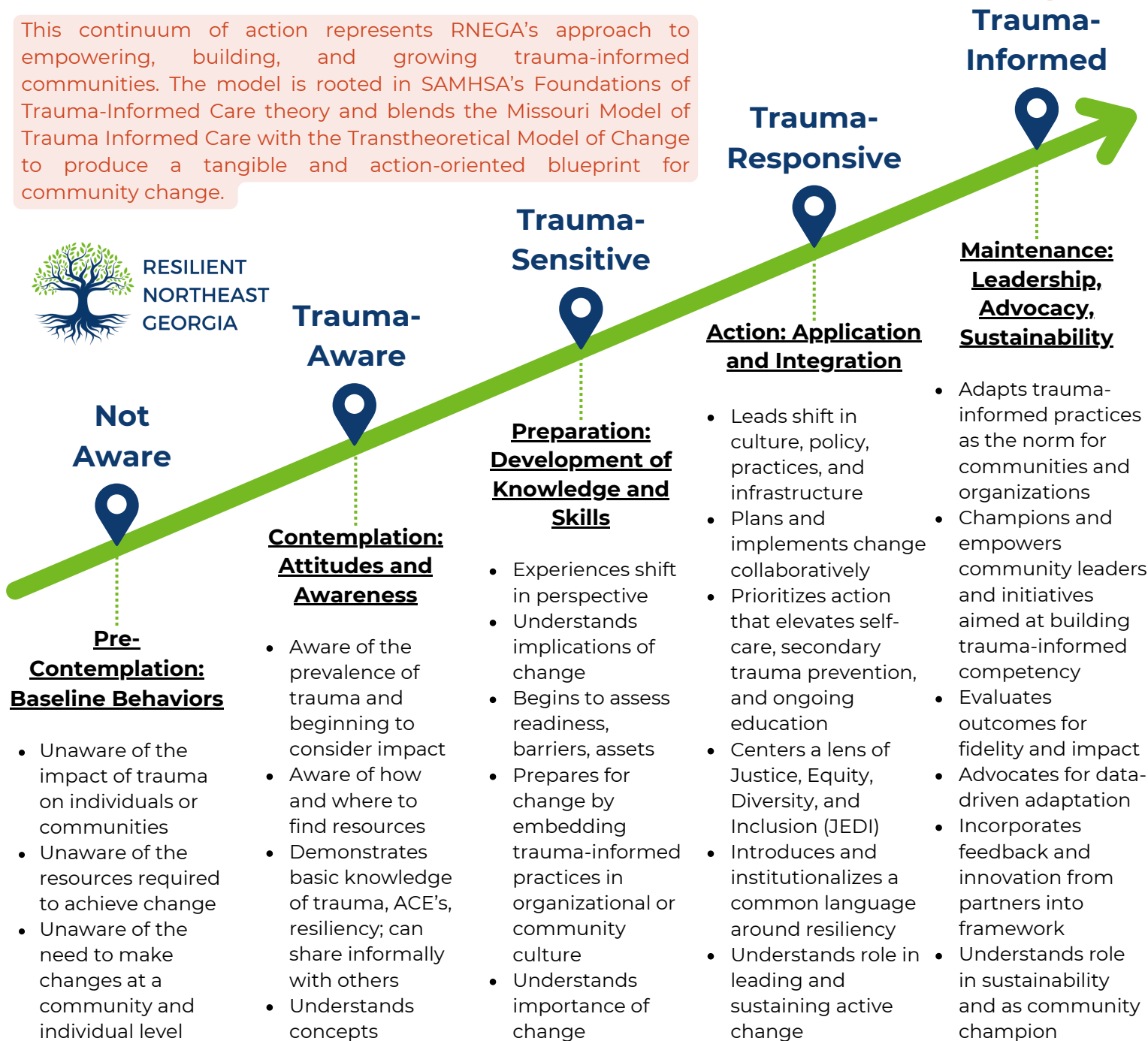


Trauma-Informed Continuum of Change

This continuum of action represents RNEGA's approach to empowering, building, and growing trauma-informed communities. The model is rooted in SAMHSA's Foundations of Trauma-Informed Care theory and blends the Missouri Model of Trauma Informed Care with the Transtheoretical Model of Change to produce a tangible and action-oriented blueprint for community change.



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Trauma-Informed Foundational Concepts

Four R's of Trauma-Informed Practice

1. **Realize** impact
2. **Recognize** signs and symptoms
3. **Respond** with trauma-informed practices
4. **Resist** re-traumatization

Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach

- Safety
- Trust and Transparency
- Peer Support
- Collaboration and Mutuality
- Empowerment, Choice, and Voice
- Inclusivity, Cultural Competency, and Belonging



RNEGA LOGIC MODEL: 2024-2025

Inputs	Activities	Outputs
Grant funding from Resilient Georgia for two-year project	Baseline evaluation of partnership landscape with Family Connection via interviews/listening sessions	12 Family Connection Executive Directors' baseline interviews completed for evaluation
Program management hire for grant duration: Meredith Lysaught	Regional summits convening local partners and stakeholders annually	461 participants and 2,766 contact hours engaged across three regional trauma summits
Key personnel and partners working alongside the program manager	Creation of Resilient Northeast Georgia website, promotional materials, and reports	16,556 page views from 4,214 unique visitors to RNEGA website
Leadership, guidance, and decision-making from Athens Area Community Foundation	Formative and summative evaluation of events and activities	3,862 participants in local events and trainings since January 2020
Community partners from nonprofit, public, and private sectors	CRM, YMHFA, Connections Matter, and other training models and events	9,475 contact hours earned from participants since January 2020
Key collaborators from Family Connection across the region	Creation of a brand kit, assets, and brand identity collateral in partnership with a marketing firm to grow awareness	12 one-pagers developed and shared to RNEGA website on CRM skills
Evidence-based training offerings	Grant deliverables for DECAL Community Innovation grant with Clarke County Mentorship Program and AWP	1 regional grant for mentoring pilot submitted, awarded, and executed in partnership with local stakeholders
Office space at AACF for RNEGA project management	Research: one-pagers for website, manuscripts prepared for peer-reviewed submission, local dataset utilization	2 manuscripts written for publication, 1 forthcoming and one published
Outcomes		
Short Term (1 Year)	Intermediate (2-5 Years)	Long-term (>5 Years)
Increased connectivity and resourcing among regional partners on issues of behavioral health, trauma, and resiliency	Increase in proportion of local nonprofit professionals, educators, and stakeholders referring youth to formal and community-based mental health services when appropriate	Decreased incidence and prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) regionally
Increased capacity for trauma-informed awareness across all nonprofit, public, and private RNEGA partners and collaborators	Increased access to evidence-based trainings and professional development for regional behavioral health partners and providers	Increased level of wellbeing among individuals from birth to 26 years of age
Increase in new sector engagements and presentation of trauma-informed information	Improved mental health outcomes among youth served by CRM-trained professionals	Improvements in mental health outcomes across all population groups reached
Increase in proportion of local nonprofit professionals trained in evidence-based models (CRM, YMHFA, Connections Matter)	Improved outcomes among providers, local nonprofit professionals, educators, and stakeholders trained in secondary trauma prevention	Sustained partnerships and collaborations across nonprofit, public, and private sectors in behavioral health and resiliency



Family Connection Coordinator Listening Sessions

With several key Family Connection leaders retiring this year, our Year 5 listening sessions focused on capturing data from both the outgoing and incoming Family Connection coordinators. This ensures that we capture an end-line analysis of the previous leader's experiences while also collecting a baseline for the incoming leader.

The listening sessions revealed a complex interplay of successes, challenges, and opportunities for future development within the Resilient Northeast Georgia-Family Connection partnership.

A dominant theme emerging from the interviews was the marked increase in community awareness surrounding trauma and its impact. Coordinators interviewed consistently described a shift in conversations, with trauma becoming a more frequently discussed topic in various settings, from school board meetings to community gatherings. This rising awareness is fostering a more nuanced understanding of trauma's effects and driving the adoption of trauma-informed approaches within institutions and organizations. One coordinator observed, "There's clearly much more awareness now...It's very common in meetings for people to bring up trauma and its impact."

However, this increased awareness is not uniformly distributed across all communities. Significant disparities in access to resources remain, with underserved populations facing greater challenges in accessing support and services. One recurring concern highlighted the inequitable distribution of resources and the difficulty of reaching marginalized communities. The following themes emerged:

- **Expanding Reach and Impact of Trauma-Informed Practices:**
 - Outgoing coordinators reflected in the significant growth seen since the start of the partnership and within the statewide network of coalitions as a whole.
- **Navigating Challenges in Implementation and Measurement:**
 - Both outgoing and incoming coordinators reflected on difficulties in accurately measuring the impact of preventative work during and after implementation.
- **Strategic Prioritization and Urgency of Early Intervention:**
 - Outgoing and incoming coordinators both saw a need for enhancing the coalition's capacity for a focused, strategic approach to preventative program development.
- **Community Engagement and Approaches to Diverse Needs:**
 - Coordinators reflected on the challenging nature of effective engagement in both the retrospective and prospective lens. Most acknowledged this a central to their work and their approach to building connections with diverse populations.
- **Building Capacity, Fostering Sustainability, and Managing Leadership Transitions:**
 - All coordinators expressed an interest in ensuring the sustainability of the initiative through leadership transitions and shifts in strategic plans. One interviewee reflected on the "intense period of leadership transitions" they've seen in their community and within the region and advised on building better internal capacity and leadership mentoring processes moving forward to ensure momentum and impact.

Reflection on Successes and Hopes for the Future

Outgoing Coordinators

- Open Communication and Flexibility
- Improved Awareness
- Profoundly Impactful Regional Events

Incoming Coordinators

- A Regional Identity to Rally Around
- Peer Collaboration and Support
- Capacity for Individual Transformation

CONNECT WITH US!

Resilient Northeast Georgia will continue to focus on empowering counties in our service area to sustain and expand trauma-informed efforts. We invite all to join and partner with us. Here is how:



Help Spread the Word

Build brand awareness of our efforts by:

- Sharing about the coalition with your professional and personal contacts in conversation.
- Sharing information on your social media about resilience and being trauma-informed.

Engage with your local Family Connection

We formally partner with all FC executive directors in our region.

You can:

- Contact your county's coordinator and ask how you can help.
- Attend community meetings and trainings offered by your local FC.



Training Roadmap



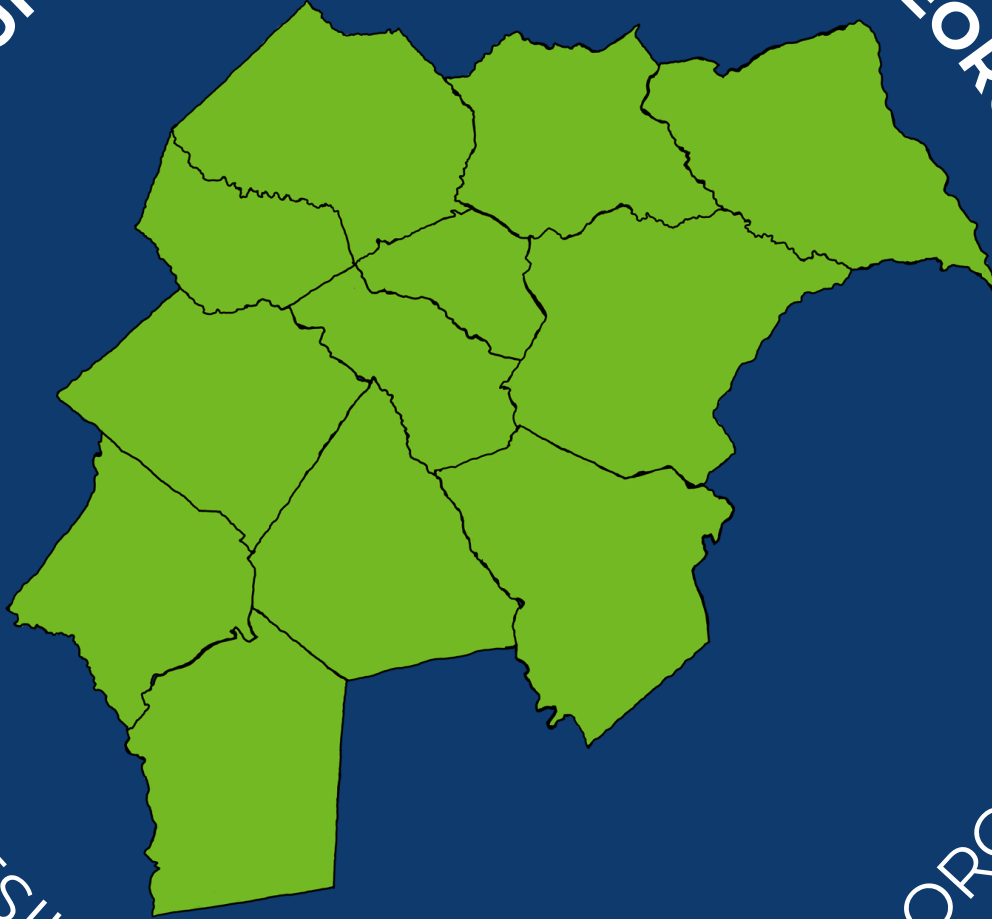
Build A Trauma-Informed Community

As a community, you can:

- Host a discussion, meeting, or roadmap training around resiliency, wellbeing, and trauma-informed practices.
- Utilize the Trauma 101 module and toolkit to create trauma-informed business practices.
- Learn something new about resiliency today at resilientnortheastgeorgia.org.



BUILDING A TRAUMA-INFORMED NORTHEAST GEORGIA TOGETHER



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