Advancing Innovation and Opportunity
2022 Impact Report
Enter the State of Innovation

It brings us great pleasure to provide this annual update on the activities of the Partnership for Inclusive Innovation (the Partnership). It’s been a year of significant progress and increasing impact for the Partnership and for Georgia. This past year Georgia has seen a doubling in the annual venture capital invested, totaling more than $4 billion in 2021. With the assistance of organizations such as the Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurs and the Georgia MBDA Business Center, diverse group of founders are being invested, mentored, and promoted. At the Partnership we are focused on the disparity between the innovation/entrepreneurship activity level in Atlanta and the next level of urban hubs, such as Savannah, Athens, Augusta, Columbus and Macon. Our goal is to provide all of these hubs with the resources necessary to accelerate innovation and talent development for the entirety of Georgia. That’s what we’re here to do.

The Partnership is structured as a statewide, public-private partnership, jointly supported by the State of Georgia and the private sector. With the support of the state of Georgia and our corporate and other partners we are investing in innovative solutions for shared economic opportunities across the state – all of it. Our model is a unique asset for Georgia and nationally. It is a foundation crossed with an action tank with committed public-private sector leadership that can focus on long-term investments in geographically distributed, nontraditional, underserved and emerging areas. We define inclusive innovation as increasing access and opportunities for everyone to innovate so that the results can spur economic and community prosperity.

Traditionally, startups have been seen as the main drivers of innovation. This is too myopic a view. We believe that local governments, nonprofits, students and community groups can also immeasurably advance innovation by tapping into our grants, technical assistance and expertise, and most importantly, through our network of public-private partners, which includes representatives from government, private industry and higher education.

We believe stronger, more sustainable outcomes are the result of an intentionally inclusive process. We champion innovation wherever it flourishes and thrives, and central to our mission, is a commitment to expand access to Georgians of all backgrounds, particularly in rural and underrepresented communities. The Partnership works to build multiple hubs of innovation that are cross-cutting and serve as a larger network that together can strive to make Georgia and the tech capital of the East Coast and model for inclusive innovation.

Innovation is everywhere in Georgia; we simply need to look for it. As investors and technological talent continue to evaluate the relative attractiveness of various states, they can rest assured that coming to Georgia means there is a committed, statewide public-private partnership that is advancing innovation and technology for shared economic and community prosperity for all. We want to welcome them to Georgia, the “State of Innovation” and we thank you for your continued support. As much have we have achieved at the Partnership this year, we’re confident we are just at the very beginning of our long-term impact on advancing innovation and shared prosperity for all of Georgia.

Sincerely,

G.R. “Bud” Peterson, Ph.D
President Emeritus and Regents Professor
Georgia Institute of Technology

Debra Lam
Founding Executive Director
Another Year of Impact for the Future of Georgia

The Partnership for Inclusive Innovation (the Partnership) has come together for a singular, critical purpose: to activate untapped potential throughout Georgia by catalyzing collaboration among the next generation of innovation leaders and the powerful ecosystem of businesses, urban, suburban and rural communities, universities and government to advance Georgia’s economic development for a stronger, more resilient and equitable future.

The Partnership believes great ideas and new businesses can come from anywhere and everywhere but the opportunity to innovate has not been shared equally. By democratizing access to innovation, the Partnership leverages resources across business, research universities and government to advance innovation across the state.

The Partnership has made a lot of progress in just two short years. In addition to setting new programs in motion, we’re proud to have made a real impact in advancing innovation and inclusivity across the entire state of Georgia.

First, as a unique public-private coalition, we have galvanized long-term commitments to leverage expertise and collective decision-making across complementary public and private resources.

Second, the Partnership serves all of Georgia. From centers of existing innovation excellence to frequently overlooked rural hamlets and every point in between to assure the whole state is moving towards innovation, together.

The Partnership believes in the broadest definition of “inclusive innovation.” We work to increase access and expand geographic, racial, gender and socio-economic equity and opportunity for all to create innovative ways that drive economic and community growth.

Finally, the Partnership doesn’t simply provide financial assistance. It uses a hybrid model that combines grantmaking with hands-on program operation and infrastructure for researchers, students, nonprofits, community groups and small businesses across the state.

On the next pages, you’ll see how our four pillars — Economic Opportunity, Student Engagement, Community Research and Workforce Development — work together to create a complementary force multiplier that amplifies our efficacy.

“Police departments are under-resourced and understaffed around the nation. The use of technology has been a force multiplier to reduce crime. This grant will give...the entire police department team the tools they need to provide public safety for our city.”

– Mayor LaRhonda Patrick, City of Warner Robins
Economic Opportunity supports the Partnership’s goal to define Georgia’s entrepreneurial identity as a national leader in innovation and technology research, development and implementation by empowering a diverse community of innovation leaders to collaborate on ideas and projects that create opportunities and scale social and economic impact for all Georgians. We have supported six projects and invested $1.8M in projects that create and sustain shared opportunities of economic success. In return, our projects have secured $6.2 million in additional funding to be leveraged for development in the Georgia ecosystem. We proudly amplify the work we have been able to accomplish to ensure the access and opportunities created are sustained through a growing statewide community of innovation champions.

The Working Farms Fund
The first of its kind in the country, The Working Farms Fund helps preserve farmland in perpetuity from encroaching urban and suburban sprawl. Last year the Fund purchased seven farms and secured 675 acres of farmland for 31 new farmers. This coming year, the Fund will purchase six more farms and at least 500 more acres of farmland for at least a dozen new farmers, as well as launch a companion program in Illinois with additional conversations in Texas and North Carolina.

Kids’-Doc-On-Wheels
This innovative children’s healthcare program is delivering comprehensive medical and behavioral health beyond the four walls of a traditional medical office. Led by Dr. Lynette Wilson-Phillips, MD, the project serves children ages 0 to 18 in public and private schools, early learning and daycare programs and local community based organizations. The school-based telemedicine clinic will create an integrated health care system for communities across the state that includes the services of the community clinicians, children’s hospital and community medical school programs by introducing and maintaining health in the child’s learning environment.

Student Engagement aims to develop next generation leaders across the state for public service, innovation and technology through programming, experiential learning and mentorship for a more inclusive Georgia.

This year’s Smart Community Corps (SCC) program had 33 interns competitively selected from 140 applicants. They represent 11 Georgia universities and 17 academic disciplines. The students spent the summer working on 16 projects across the state. In addition to the civic innovation work, what makes Smart Community Corps unique is its pair model. SCC work primarily in pairs on projects, bringing complementary backgrounds, skills and expertise together to learn from each other as they collaborate on the projects.

The Ray: “Suggest-a-Tech”
Partnered with Smart Community Corp, the Ray identified emerging technologies as part of its growing “Suggest-a-Tech” program. This initiative aimed to transform the Ray C. Anderson Memorial Highway corridor into a global model for sustainable transportation for which its honoree, Anderson, advocated. Smart Community Corp developed research and opportunities for more investors to share ideas, as well as share progress on the project along the way.

Tracing Georgia Innovation
The Georgia Entrepreneurship Project helps trace Georgia’s entrepreneurship and innovation landscape. As industries aim to develop the economic landscape, Dr. Clayton, Paige at Georgia Tech, believes mapping the current state and tracing the history will be influential to the next opportunities of innovation and economic development. SCC work to geographically characterize innovation and entrepreneurship based on specific industries, aiming to find data-driven patterns that have historically made certain Georgia areas more economically appealing and less so with the goal of expanding prosperity more equally across the state.
The Partnership values inclusivity and aims to progress a culture that embodies that spirit and invest in the future of innovation without barriers. The Partnership’s flagship Community Research program, the Georgia Smart Communities Challenge is an award-winning program that assists leaders in identifying solutions that are researched, tested and evaluated by subject-matter experts. Often referred to as simply “Georgia Smart” this community research assistance program empowers communities on their journey to innovation by helping them to envision a smart and connected future. This program has served 20 communities across the state of Georgia, helping to activate over 170 technologies and facilitate over 30 community engagement meetings. Alumni of the program have gone on to experience wide-ranging success, including recognition on a national and international scale.

Savannah Civic Data Science for Equitable Development
The City of Savannah leveraged data analytics and machine learning to address vacant and blighted properties in the community. The multidisciplinary research team analyzed more than two million merged real estate data records including more than 104,000 properties and developed a machine learning algorithm that reaches 87–95% accuracy in predicting vacant and deteriorated land or structures. On average, each blighted property identified and ameliorated saves the City of Savannah $1,300+ a year.

Traffic Monitoring to Improve Safety, Connectivity, and Efficiency
In the City of Valdosta, the city revolutionized its traffic system and helped first responders arrive faster when seconds and minutes matter the most. The project connected all 128 traffic signals throughout the city and trained 72 firefighters operating ten fire trucks on signal preemption. This resulted in critical time savings of more than 10 critical seconds per intersection and won multiple national and international awards.

The Partnership has launched its fourth and newest pillar, Workforce Development, to invest in human capital across the state to build capabilities that meet the needs of employers. The Workforce Development pillar engages the current and developing workforce to build meaningful careers, create systems of economic mobility, build pipelines for talent to Georgia employers across the state and boost connectivity in the workforce throughout the state and its various sectors.

Workforce for Tomorrow Fellowship
The flagship program of the Workforce Development pillar is the Workforce for Tomorrow Fellowship (WFT). WFT is a first-of-its-kind rotational fellowship program that aims to cultivate next-generation leaders with multi-industry transferable skills that deftly navigate public/private sectors, and to build public-private partnerships in key growth areas for social impact. Target industries include agriculture (AgTech), finance (FinTech), sustainability and infrastructure, manufacturing and logistics, information technology and health (BioTech and MedTech). The rotational program engages fellows in launching their careers, while also contributing to growth within the state of Georgia. For the public and private sectors, the program aims to eliminate or decrease sectoral silos to boost a competitive edge for the state. WFT is unique because fellows are placed into six-month rotations in the public and private sectors, within one industry.
Meaningful Progress. Measurable Results.

Although the projects featured here have already yielded great results, we’re just starting to see how much The Partnership for Inclusive Innovation can do to make a material impact on Georgians everywhere, and advance innovation, opportunity and shared economic success. The reach across the state has expanded since the Partnership began its work, and seeing the mission realized throughout almost all economic districts in Georgia has been a direct result of the hard work, focused leadership and expert team we’ve enlisted.

This year our impact has included programs across our pillars that distinguish the Partnership from any program of its kind. Our 30 active projects include:

90+ congressional districts served
14 community research collaborations
16 colleges and universities
30+ multidisciplinary researchers

Such intentional inclusion has resulted in:

24 new businesses created and supported
71 access to capital opportunities
170+ technologies
25K+ student hours devoted to civic tech projects

We are proud to share the direct impact we have helped create and how the span of our work has been bringing about meaningful change across the entire state of Georgia.

“I’m honored to be part of the Partnership for Inclusive Innovation and to help define Georgia as a national leader in technology research, development and implementation. Georgia has been voted the number one state in which to do business for six years in a row, and it has a strong commitment to entrepreneurship and innovation. I look forward to seeing the long-term impact that the Partnership will make across Georgia in the future.”

— Reed Dulany, President and CEO, Dulany Industries
Galvanizing Support That’s Stronger Together

Our growth has come from the incredible team, partners and advisors that the Partnership has coalesced. Thanks to incredible work and support, we have reached a new level of growth and necessary expansion across the state of Georgia.

Our Board of Advisors

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Carol Tomé
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President and CEO, Technology Association of Georgia

Pat Wilson
Commissioner, Georgia Department of Economic Development

Chris Womak
President, Chairman and CEO, Georgia Power

Our Leadership

Clarence Anthony, Jr., PhD
Workforce Development Manager

Stephanie Broxton
Community Research Manager

Cody Cocchi, Ed.D
Student Engagement Manager

Debra Lam
Founding Executive Director

Jamal Lewis
Economic Opportunity Manager

Polly Sattler
Strategic Relations Manager

Our Partners

[List of logos and names of partners]
Innovation, Opportunity and Shared Economic Success

Collaboration among the next generation of innovation leaders located in urban, suburban and rural communities will help assure that access to progress is available equally to all. While we’re tremendously excited by what we see in the metro Atlanta area, we’re even more inspired by the entrepreneurial spirit and acumen we discover in places where it has not been previously championed. Over time this continuum of innovation across geographies will enable Georgia to emerge as the tech capital of the East Coast and model for inclusive innovation.

The progress the Partnership has made this year shows just how much we can accomplish when we work together through a public/private coalition, statewide scope, defining and advancing inclusive innovation across geographic, racial, gender and socio-economic equity and operating through a hybrid model that combines grantmaking and hands-on program operation.

We look forward to leveraging what we’ve learned in our continuing work to advance innovation, opportunity and shared economic success for all of Georgia, and beyond.