

envision

ATHENS our community • our future

Action Plan 2023



Prepared by:

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PI, Athens Wellbeing Project

Message from Envision Athens Executive Director



**Sally Kimel-Sheppard,
Envision Athens
Executive Director**

Dear Reader,

Envision Athens continues the work set forth in a multi-dimensional strategy created in 2016 by Athenians to guide community and economic development. I am very proud of the work that has been done to move Envision Athens forward through the next leg within this strategic planning process. Athens Wellbeing Project (AWP) has been a crucial partner in providing statistical data, facilitation of small focus groups along with conducting a large community input listening session. AWP's scientifically rigorous data collection and analysis has led Envision Athens to the five pillars of House, Healthy, Create, Educate and Abundance with achievable goals for each pillar. The needs as identified by our community are what Athenians state are the most important tasks for Envision Athens to focus on for the next few years. These tasks in some cases are already being taken on by community partnerships. The fact that Athenians continue to identify some of these tasks as needs for Athens exemplifies that there is more work to be done.

It is my responsibility to assist Athens in moving forward as a catalyst, convener, and champion of progress in addressing these identified needs of our community. Envision Athens will do this work along-side many individuals, community partners and with agencies such as Athens-Clarke County government, Athens Area Chamber of Commerce, Athens Housing Authority, Clarke County School District, Piedmont Athens Regional, St. Mary's Health Care System, Georgia Power, the City of Winterville, and United Way of Northeast Georgia.

Join Envision Athens as we aspire to reach our full potential in unity, prosperity, equity and compassion for all Athenians.

Thank you,
Sally Kimel-Sheppard

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Introduction



MURAL ARTIST: TAYLOR SHAW

Our Mission:
Envision Athens serves Athens-Clarke County as the catalyst, convener, and champion of progress in addressing our community's most pressing needs and optimizing our opportunities for collaborative community development.

Envision Athens is a community-wide effort to develop a common vision for the future of the Athens-Clarke County community. This process has resulted in a visionary, yet achievable multidimensional strategy to guide community and economic development for the next 20 years. Envision Athens was and will continue to be open and inclusive, intuitive and informed, and carefully designed and implemented. The core values include: unity, equity, prosperity, and compassion. All of Envision Athens work is driven by these core values.

In May 2018, a 23-member Implementation and oversight Committee (IOC) was formed to guide the work of Envision Athens and its Action Plan. This work was spearheaded by Project Manager Erin Barger. In the fall of 2021, the IOC decided to incorporate Envision Athens as a 501 c 3, non-profit organization to continue the work. In April of 2022, Envision Athens hired Executive Director Sally Kimel-Sheppard to lead the agency. Envision Athens IOC has now evolved into a Board of Directors that stewards the nonprofit agency in partnership with the Executive Director.

In 2018, work on the Action Agenda began with 14 different projects spanning across broad work topics in the categories of People, Place, and Prosperity. Much was accomplished from 2018 through 2021. In fall 2022, Envision Athens began the strategic planning process in partnership with the Athens Wellbeing Project, resulting in a more targeted focus on five work topic areas: housing, health, arts & culture, food security, and education/workforce development. This report presents the data, analysis, and recommendations on next steps for Envision Athens in each of these five areas.

These projects will evolve and change as the needs of Athens evolve and change over time. Envision Athens is unlike any other non-profit in Athens-- our focus can change to match the dynamic needs of the Athens community. We do this by tracking progress, using meaningful data, and listening to our community to collectively move towards a better Athens for all.

About the Athens Wellbeing Project



Athens Wellbeing Project Mission:
To empower the Athens community with meaningful data that will lead to more informed decision-making, improvements in service delivery, and greater quality of life for our citizens.

MURAL ARTIST: DAVID HALE

The Athens Wellbeing Project (AWP) is pioneering an unprecedented collaboration of community leaders, using a data collection approach that is unique and comprehensive. Our assessment provides information in five domain areas: civic vitality, community safety, health, housing, and lifelong learning. The AWP mission is to empower the Athens community with meaningful data that will lead to more informed decision-making, improvements in service delivery, and greater quality of life for our citizens. We are accomplishing our mission through the collection and analysis of longitudinal data, including:

- Representative sample data of Athens-Clarke County households; and
- Secondary data collected and analyzed at varying levels of geographic specification, (e.g. U.S. Census American Community Survey, Georgia Department of Public Health Data, and Clarke County School District Data).

Our primary data comes from the Athens Wellbeing Project survey. To gather longitudinal data on the Athens community, we have administered three iterations of the survey: AWP 1.0 in 2016, AWP 2.0 in 2018, and AWP 3.0 in 2021/2022. Our survey data close the gap in existing secondary data sets, providing our community with more robust information that can be used to inform policy and practice in a variety of settings. Envision Athens is the latest example of such an opportunity.

AWP Institutional Partners provide financial assistance as well as organizational and operational support to the project. These partners include the Athens Area Community Foundation, Athens-Clarke County Unified Government, ACC Police Department, Clarke County School District, Envision Athens, St. Mary's Health Care System, Piedmont Athens Regional Medical Center, the Athens Housing Authority, and the University of Georgia.

AWP Theory of Change



Data collection, analysis, reporting

Stakeholders use data to inform decision-making

Service delivery & policy is more effective and equitable

Individual and population outcomes are improved

Wellbeing in our community increases

Athens Wellbeing Project data are designed to be used, with stakeholders taking the data and generating new information that becomes knowledge that decision-makers act on. In turn, decisions are more informed and over time service delivery and policy outcomes are more effective and fair. This will lead to improvements in community wellbeing. The AWP research team collaborates with Neighborhood Leaders and students at the University of Georgia to collect the survey data. The latest data from AWP 3.0 were collected in Winter 2021-2022 and resulted in a robust, representative sample of families and households that look like our community as a whole. For more information on this project, please visit <https://athenswellbeingproject.org>.

Athens Wellbeing Project Team & Sample

RESEARCH TEAM

Dr. Amanda Abraham,
Survey Design
Celia Eicheldinger,
Sampling Expert
Dr. Jerry Shannon,
GIS Expert & Community
Geography
Rebecca Baskam,
Project Manager

NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERS

Terris Thomas, Director
+ 16 NLs

UGA STUDENTS

3 Graduate
Assistants, 8 interns,
100+ volunteer
students

FINAL SAMPLE

Total sample size for
this round is n=3,996
households.

Adding all three
rounds, we have
6,439 households in
the pooled sample.

CONFIDENCE

Data are
representative to
the population.
Special populations
in the data include:
homeless families,
public housing
residents, older
adults, Latino
families.

Methods & Approach

In August 2022, Envision Athens Executive Director Sally Kimel-Sheppard and board leadership voted to partner with the Athens Wellbeing Project to engage in a strategic planning process.

This process is intended to guide the organization's next steps and action areas of focus, hereafter called "Work Topics." The five areas of focus include: House Athens (housing), Healthy Athens (specifically behavioral health), Abundance Athens (food security), Create Athens (arts and culture), and Educate Athens (workforce development).

The diagram below shows the four stage process. The planning process was designed to be both inclusive and scientifically rigorous. The methodological approach is mixed methods, meaning that a variety of data sources were used--both quantitative (existing secondary data such as U.S. Census data and primary survey data from Athens Wellbeing Project), and qualitative (focus groups conducted with key stakeholders and a public listening session). The resulting findings were then used to write this report to Envision Athens executive and board leadership to shape the work plan of the organization as it has fully transitioned to a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization aimed at positive community development across the five work topics.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

ONE AWP DATA



- 2022 Post-COVID AWP data was mined across domain
- Used in conjunction with Census and other secondary indicators to understand current issues and develop focus group areas and questions

TWO FOCUS GROUPS



- Four focus groups conducted September 2022
- 6-12 key stakeholders participated in one hour guided conversations
- Areas of arts and culture, behavioral health, workforce development, and food security
- Data generated were used to complement AWP data and design listening session prompts

THREE LISTENING SESSION



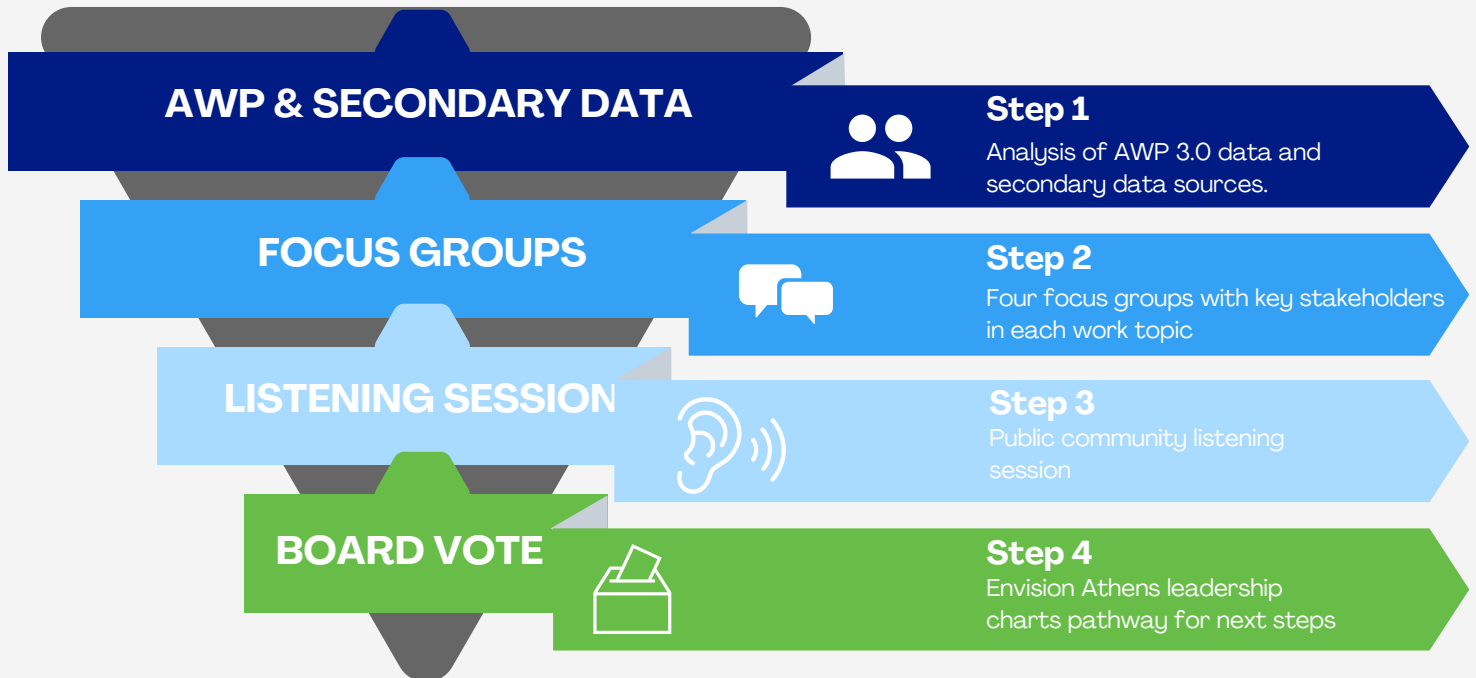
- Community invited to participate in facilitated listening session that will invite discussion across work topics
- Goal is to generate action items for Envision Athens to convene partners and make progress in areas identified by the community members participating in the listening session

FOUR ACTION PLAN



- Data from AWP, focus groups, and listening session presented to Envision Athens Board
- Written report made available to the public on Envision Athens Website
- Board and Executive Director determine next steps across five work topic areas using data and community input.

Methods & Approach



In step 1, AWP survey data were examined to understand the prevalence of community issues across the five domains of the survey. Findings showed significant change in housing, health and healthcare access (with the most pressing health area of need being behavioral health). Findings also showed major increases in food insecurity and hunger, and other areas of socioeconomic distress (many issues rooted in challenges around education and the lack of workforce development in the community). Secondary data sources were also used to understand population-level demographic shifts and supply-side dynamics (e.g. number of healthcare providers).

Step 2 built on the survey and secondary data findings. Four one hour focus groups were held in September 2022 across the work topic areas to dig into the issues observed in the secondary data and to understand the community's challenges and strengths at a deeper level. Focus group participants included key stakeholders with professional and personal experience in the work topic they were invited to attend.

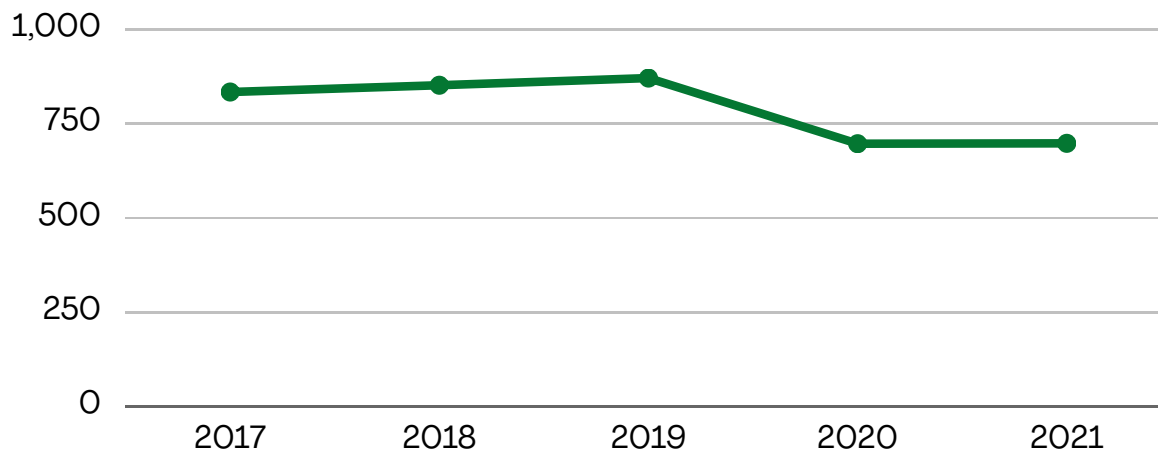
Step 3 was a public listening session where over 100 community members attended, learned about the findings in Steps 1 and 2, and provided input and feedback to decide specific actions for Envision Athens in each of the five work topic areas. Step 4 was to present these findings and recommendations to Envision Athens board leadership for determining next steps.

House Athens

Housing is one of the most pressing issues in Athens-Clarke County. The combination of rising housing costs, decreases in available housing units, inflation, and the end of pandemic-era moratoriums on eviction have increased the probability of eviction and housing volatility. While low income families are disproportionately affected by what is considered by many to be a housing crisis, many families across the income distribution are "housing stressed," which is defined as spending more than 30% of your take-home pay on rent or mortgage. Quality, affordable housing is a challenge across our community.

Housing Data: Findings and Time Trends

Cost of housing has risen significantly in the last three years. Simultaneously, the supply of available housing has decreased. Among public housing residents, the average time on the waiting list has increased by 200% (from 10 months to 20 months) in three years. There has also been a significant decrease in the number of Section 8 vouchers accepted. The line graph below shows the number of Section 8 units in ACC between 2017 and 2021. Source: HUD, 2022.



29% Households have moved at least once in last two years.

\$1126 Average monthly rent/mortgage (AWP, 2022)

1 IN 10 HOUSEHOLDS HAVE BEEN THREATENED WITH EVICTION IN THE LAST 90 DAYS (AWP, 2022)

10%

"Housing affects everything. If people can't afford their rent, they are at risk of eviction. If they get evicted, then their needs snowball and it's hard to intervene at that point."

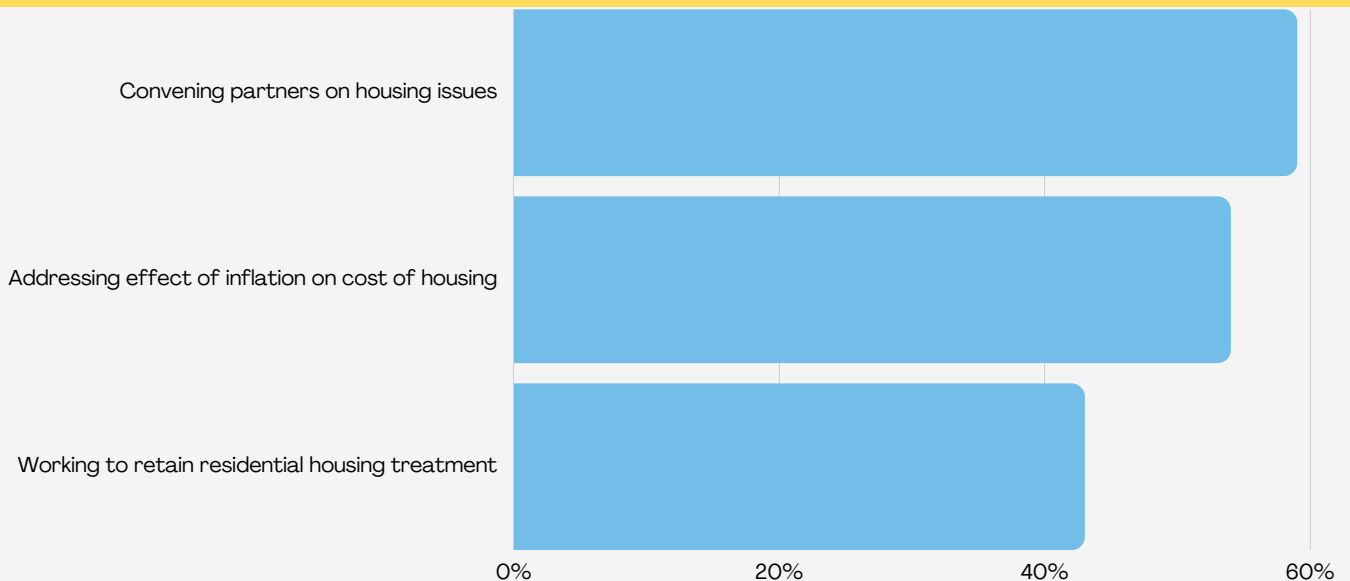
"It's getting more and more expensive to live in Athens. A lot of families just can't afford it anymore and are having to leave the county."

House Athens

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Cost	Supply	Housing/Tenant Rights	Planning/Zoning: Policy Issues
Increased cost of housing has stressed most families	Not enough units for renters and buyers.	Many residents (renters) do not know their rights.	Need for policy change to benefit families and individuals who are facing housing fragility
Low income renters are especially struggling, many are moving out of the county	Supply constraint is not just a problem for individuals: also for organizations.	Fearful of exercising rights because of eviction threats	Need for more Section 8 units

LISTENING SESSION FINDINGS

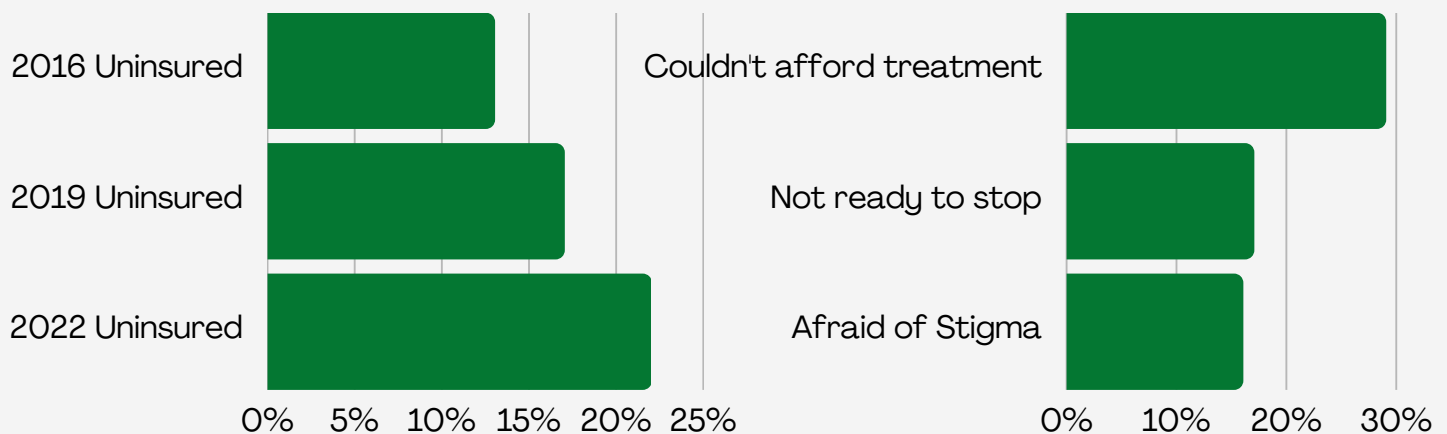


Healthy Athens

The topic of behavioral health includes both mental health and substance use issues. Latest AWP data on general healthcare access have shown significant erosion in the average Athens household's ability to access the primary, mental, and dental care they need. Uninsurance rose from 17% to 22% between 2019 and 2022. Anxiety and depression prevalence have risen as well--over one third of households have had a health professional diagnose at least one person in the household with these conditions.

Behavioral Health Time Trends

21% of households who needed mental healthcare in the last year did not get it. Part of this was due to insurance coverage, but other reasons include stigma and inability to find a provider who could take them. Reasons for not accessing Substance Use Disorder treatment are shown in the second graph below.



49% Households lost a loved one in the last 2 years

41% Of those losses were due to COVID19.

Significant loss and grief has measurable impacts on behavioral health. In addition to this loss, social isolation has been at an all time high since 2020 due to the pandemic. Individuals with substance use disorder were more likely to fall out of recovery during this time. Increases in the percentage of households with alcohol and drug use disorders have occurred--6.5% of households have at least one person with AUD or SUD. Increases in drug overdoses are also evident, especially heroin and synthetic opioid overdoses. Additional issues include:

Workforce shortages- there are not enough behavioral health providers, especially for children.

Underinsurance- Even those that have insurance coverage often can't afford the cost of care; many providers are turning insured patients away because they don't take their insurance.

Disparity in access to care and health outcomes-Medicaid patients have little to no access; out-of-pocket payers are often turned away. People of color are disproportionately less able to get care.

"It's not just families struggling with housing costs....it's organizations, too... I don't know if we can afford to keep our leases that we have right now that provide housing to our patients."

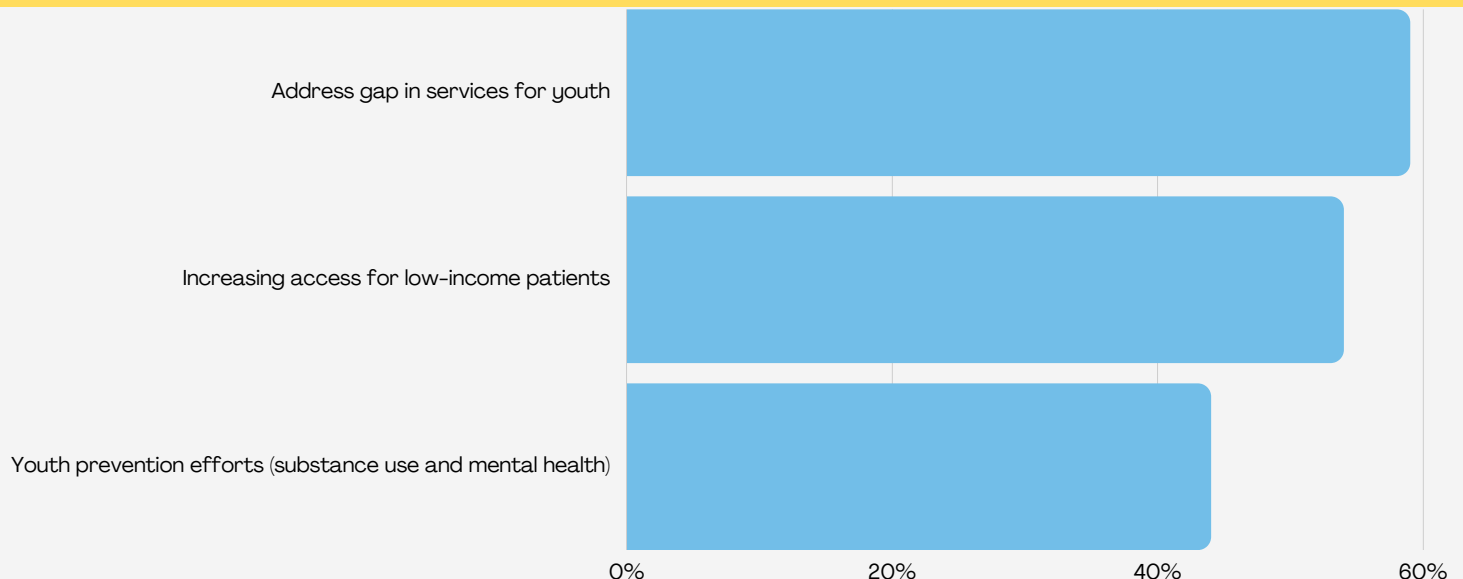
"People don't know it's ok to not be ok...especially kids. And we just don't have the services we need for young people in this community who are struggling."

Healthy Athens

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Workforce/Supply Issues	Accessing Services	Complete Gap for Children & Youth	Stigma Around Receiving Services
Need for more therapists, psychiatrists	Affordability is the biggest issue, which is tied into insurance status. Underinsurance becoming more of an issue now	Dearth of services for youth with mental health needs and substance use treatment needs	A lot of folks carry shame or stigma around mental health or substance use issues
Need more inpatient beds and issues retaining housing for organizations because of cost	Lots of families struggle with having the transportation they need, especially for daily and weekly treatment appointments.	Major need for youth prevention of substance use and outreach for behavioral health	This prevents them from seeking treatment
Serious burnout among providers	Telehealth has helped but not solved access issues completely	Grief and loss, loss of social capital during pandemic compounding these issues	This has been a significant barrier for males especially, and communities of color
Lack of indigent and medicaid providers	Finding time to get to therapy/medication appointments	Many lost caregivers (especially grandparents) during the pandemic--increasing need for mental health services for young people	Many with health insurance don't seek services due to the fear of losing their job or affecting their employer's perception of them

LISTENING SESSION FINDINGS

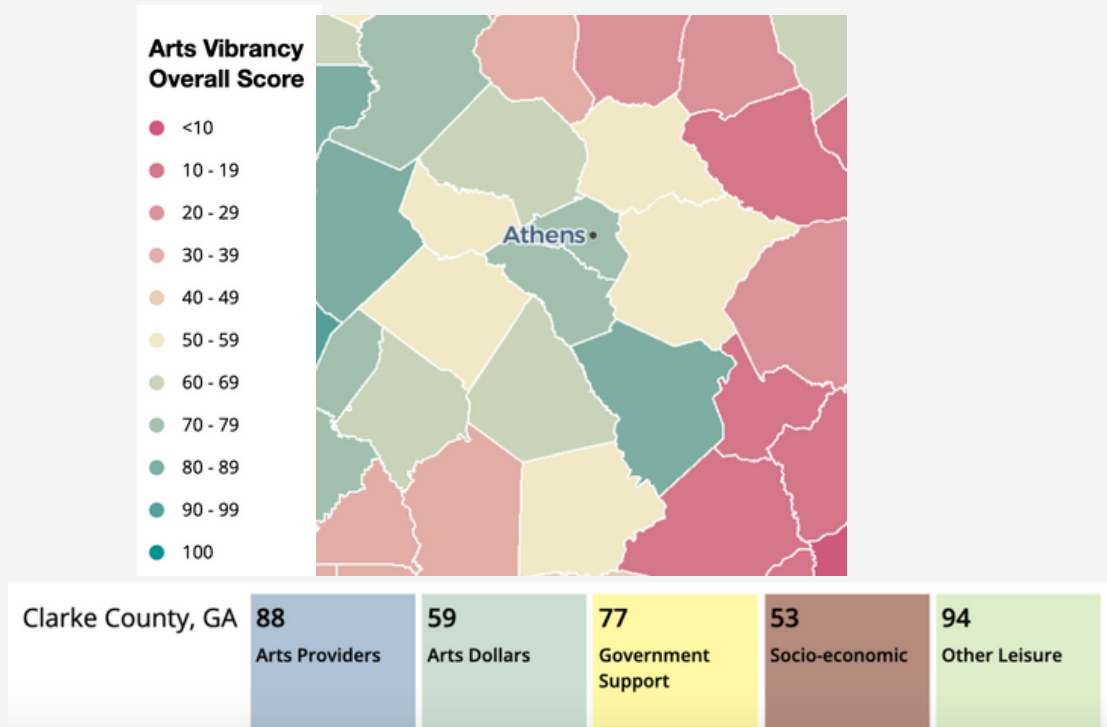


Create Athens

Arts and culture thrive in Athens, Georgia. Music, visual arts, dance, and theatre are at the heart of the arts and culture in our community. The individuals who produce art and artistic products and the venues that host events are a cornerstone of the local economy. During the pandemic, long term (throughout 2020 and much of 2021) shut down of these venues and cessation of concerts and other arts-related events affected the musicians, artists, and all stakeholders that produce them (including performance spaces, lighting, sound, and other technical professionals). The arts community is a vibrant part of our local identity and we have a critical opportunity to work together to make sure these individuals are valued and supported and able to move forward with creating in a post-pandemic landscape.

Athens Arts Scene is Regional Hub

Secondary data from the national Arts Vibrancy Map shows that Athens-Clarke County is the highest-scoring county in our region across a variety of metrics. (Source: <https://sites.smu.edu/Meadows/ArtsVibrancyMap/>)



"KIDS IN THIS COMMUNITY HAVE TO KNOW WHAT IS POSSIBLE...AND THE ONLY WAY TO KNOW THAT IS TO SEE IT... WE HAVE GOT TO GET THE DANCERS, MUSICIANS, ARTISTS, ACTORS...IN FRONT OF THESE KIDS IN THE SCHOOLS. WE HAVE TO MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE SO THEY CAN SEE THEMSELVES IN THOSE ARTISTS... AND MAYBE THEN THEY WILL PICK UP AN INSTRUMENT AND START TO PLAY THEMSELVES." - Focus Group Participant

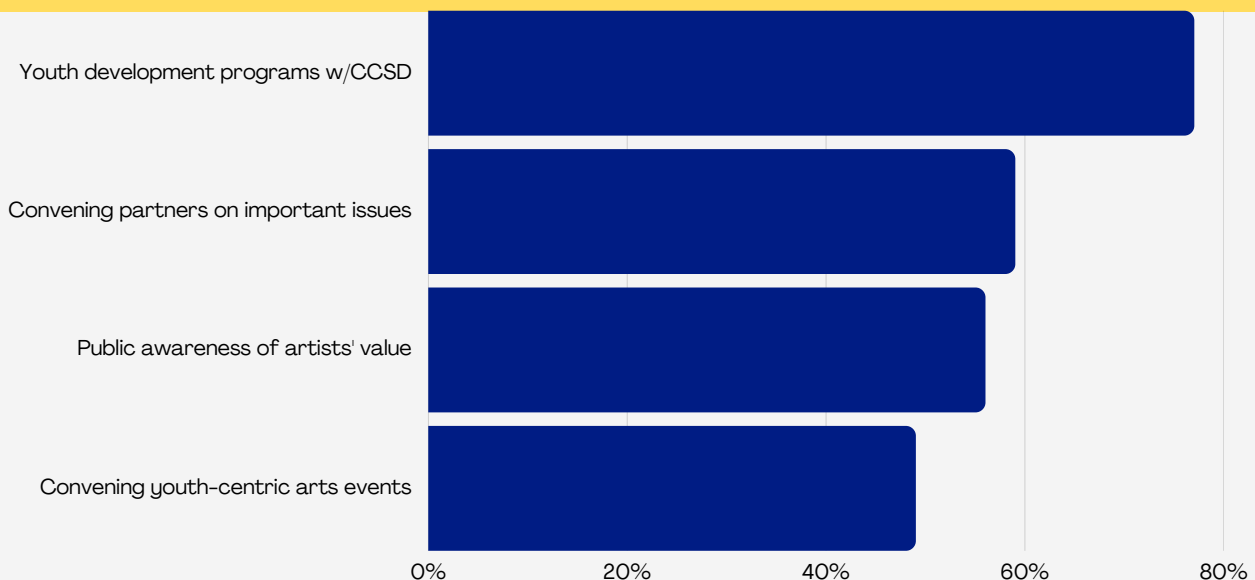
"I THINK AS AN ARTIST AND A MUSICIAN, WHAT I WANT FOR THE COMMUNITY TO KNOW IS THAT MY WORK HAS VALUE. YOU MAY GET TWO HOURS OF ENTERTAINMENT AT MY CONCERT, BUT THAT REPRESENTS THOUSANDS OF HOURS OF TIME, TALENT, AND PREPARATION."- Focus Group Participant

Create Athens

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Valuing Artists' Work	Youth & the Arts	Need for Arts-Centric Policies	Impact of Cost
Challenges in expecting creative work (performances especially) with no compensation or low compensation	Significant need for more arts exposure for youth	Policymakers need to understand the effects of policy on local creatives (from parking zones to housing)	Rapid rise in cost of living in Athens, especially housing hurts creatives
Public does not understand the time and effort it takes to produce professional creative products	We have an arts-rich community ready to partner with Clarke County School District	Keeping the effect of policy on creative community in mind is critical to continuing to foster growth across creative industry	Many cannot afford to maintain their creative work due to rising cost of living
Need for awareness and education so that the public places greater value on the work	Artists and creatives feel CCSD need to allow them in the schools more for performances and arts exposure	The arts community needs to be seen as an important part of the local economy	Many artists/creators moving to surrounding counties and are pushed out of Athens
Specific requests to increase public understanding of the time, effort, and resources that go into creative work	Need for more youth-centric arts events in the community that are accessible for all	Workforce development conversations should include how to grow and foster the arts economy given that it is so special and unique in Athens	Local ordinance preventing cohabitating with non-family members makes it more difficult to afford housing

LISTENING SESSION FINDINGS



Abundance Athens

Access to fresh, affordable food on a consistent basis is one of the fundamental necessities of life. Given the high proportion of families who are low income in our community, there is a commensurate share of families that struggle to be food secure. Food security is more complex than hunger. Hunger is a lack of adequate caloric intake. Food security includes hunger but also is about food access, food quality, and food culture. Athens Wellbeing Project worked with the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia to choose the two metrics below that now allow us to measure both hunger and food insecurity at the local level. Latest findings show both hunger and food insecurity are on the rise. We also look at food assistance utilization--and find that many families eligible for help do not get it.

Food Security Data

AWP data showed over one in ten families (12%) indicated they had gone hungry at some point in the last 30 days. In addition to going hungry, many more families are struggling with being able to afford balanced meals (this gets at the quality of food, where hunger is more about the quantity of food). Over one in four cannot regularly afford healthy food.

12% Households went hungry in the last 30 days.

26% Could not afford balanced meals "sometimes" or "often".

SNAP UNDER-UTILIZATION IS STILL A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM--PARTICIPATION INCREASED FROM 2018 BUT MANY ARE STILL FOOD INSECURE, ELIGIBLE, AND NOT PARTICIPATING.

19%

SNAP & WIC: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as Food Stamps) is a critical part of the food security safety net for families, especially those experiencing unemployment and poverty. Many families are eligible who do not participate, leaving millions of dollars in benefits on the table each year that would also have a positive economic impact on local retailers and grocers and increased sales tax revenue for the local government. Similarly, WIC, a program for pregnant and postpartum women and their young children <5 years of age, have very low utilization rates.

"THERE'S A LOT OF GOOD THAT'S GOING ON [IN THE FOOD SECURITY SPACE], BUT IT'S OFTEN FRAGMENTED, OR GRASSROOTS. I THINK IT COULD BE MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE WITH MORE COORDINATION BETWEEN AGENCIES."

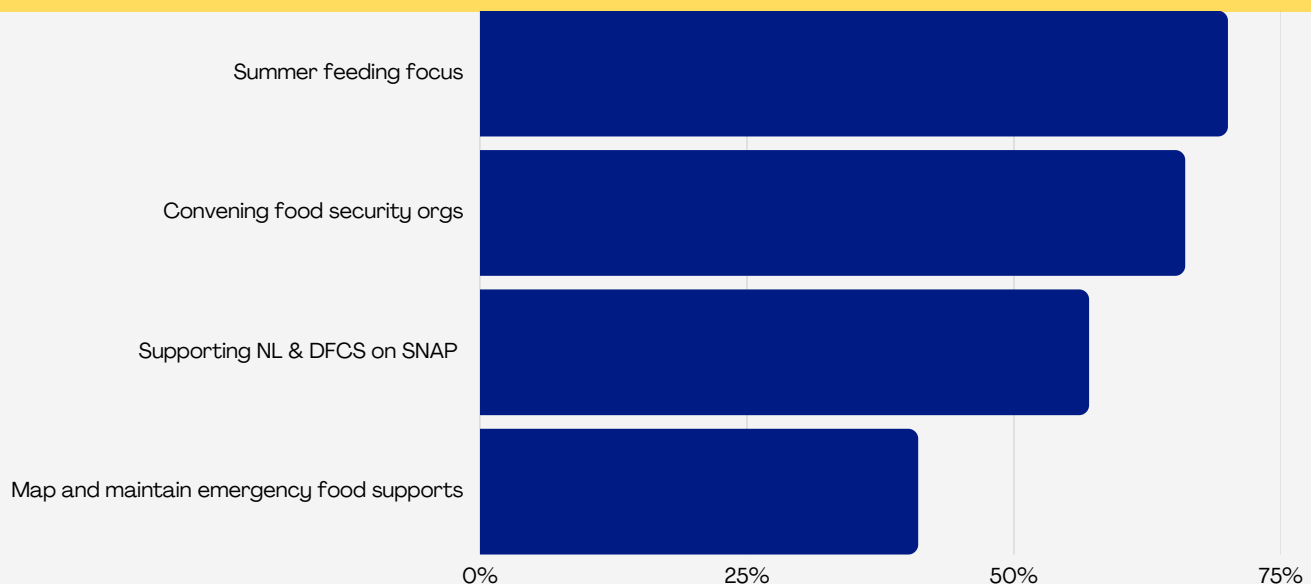
"KIDS ARE GOING HUNGRY WHEN THERE'S NO SCHOOL. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THAT? WE HAVE TO HAVE [PROGRAMS] IN PLACE THAT HELP FILL THAT GAP."

Abundance Athens

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Summer & Holiday Meal Gaps	WIC & SNAP Enrollment	Fragmented Local Food Assistance Info	Connecting & Supporting Food Partners
Lack of summer feeding coordination	Significant gains have been made in SNAP enrollment, but more is needed	Identification of soup kitchen gaps (days, times, location)	Continued convening for partners in nutrition education, food security and hunger, and program uptake is needed
Major food insecurity for school children during holidays and summer	DFCS and community partners need help in outreach for both programs	Identification of food pantry gaps is needed	New partnerships and resources have been made available through Neighborhood Leader Program
Informal grass roots efforts help but much more is needed	Recertification and physical barriers to applying	Continued need for updating those in real times for clients and families	Local MOU with Neighborhood Leaders and DFCS is significant strength
USDA policy regulations can be a major constraint to solving the problem	Pandemic changes in enrollment that were more flexible now returning to "normal"	Awareness of this information is not widely disseminated yet needs to be	More benefit navigators using the NL/DFCS MOU model is needed

LISTENING SESSION FINDINGS



Educate Athens

Educate Athens' focus is on workforce development, which is a complex and multifaceted issue. The data presented here show the challenges families are having with the cost of living, the childcare landscape, and the implications of wide-spread job and paid benefit loss in the last few years. AWP data show that families are working more (many >40 hours a week), but are having greater difficulty paying basic bills that are required for a minimum standard of living. Many individuals in Athens have a high school diploma or less and are working hourly wage jobs that have not risen in pay fast enough to keep pace with historic inflation rates in 2022. Simultaneously, there is a worker shortage. These conditions have created emergent need for connecting individuals to career development opportunities and improving communication of opportunities between workers and employees.

Workforce Development

Childcare is a workforce development issue that has become more challenging during the pandemic. Childcare is expensive, and full time spots are scarce. Local waitlists for a full time spot for an infant or young child can be 1-2 years long. Families across many levels of income struggle with this issue, but it is most difficult for low income working families.

\$604

Average monthly childcare expenditures among parents of young children

29%

Of children are in childcare centers. Most full time spots cost >\$1,000/month.



In the last 90 days, 10% took a high interest loan, 21% had difficulty paying medical bills



18% lost a job at some point in the previous 12 months; many have lost insurance, paid leave, vacation, in addition to jobs.



10% have been threatened with eviction; rent/mortgage costs have risen to average of \$1126/month



In the last 90 days, 31% had trouble paying utility bills, 28% credit card bills



27% reported being worse off financially than they were a year ago

"IT COMES DOWN TO PAY AND CULTURE...HOW EMPLOYERS TREAT THEIR EMPLOYEES MATTERS. RIGHT NOW, WE HAVE A WORKER SHORTAGE...IF A WORKER DOESN'T LIKE HOW THEY'RE BEING TREATED THEY LEAVE AND THEY FIND A JOB SOMEWHERE ELSE."

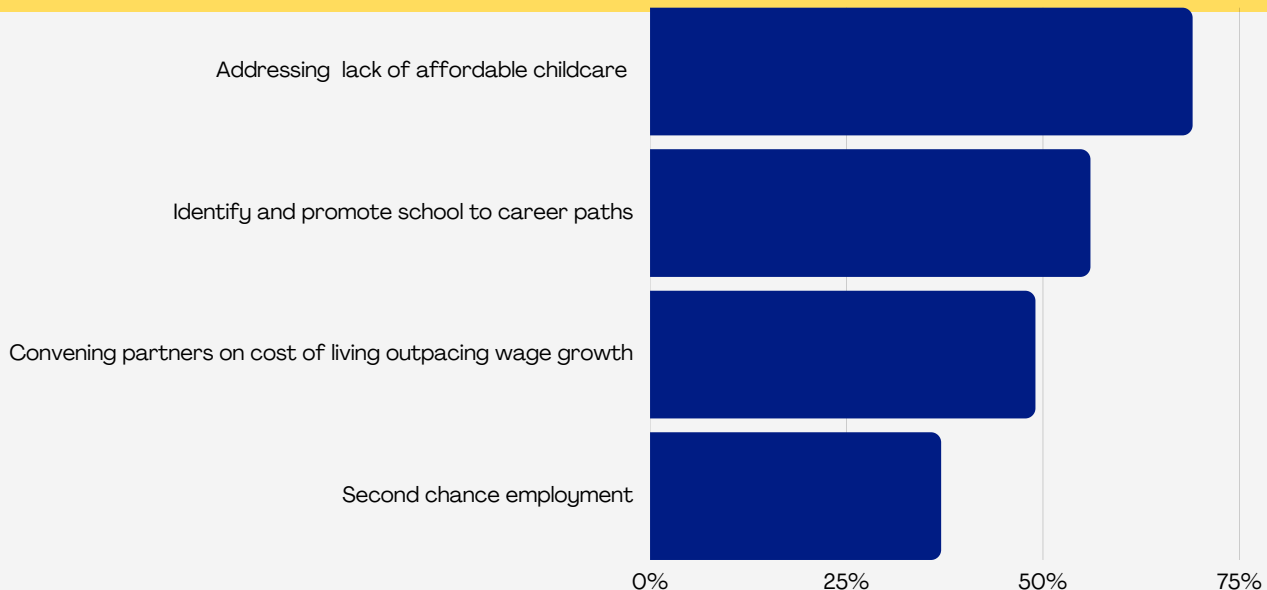
"OUR SCHOOLS [E.G. ATHENS TECH] AND CAREER ACADEMY HAVE A LOT OF PROGRAMS THAT PEOPLE JUST DON'T KNOW ABOUT...THERE ARE SOME THAT PAY FOR SCHOOL WHERE YOU CAN GO FOR FREE BUT WE NEED BETTER WAYS TO GET THE WORD OUT."

Educate Athens

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Childcare	Labor Supply & Cost of Living	Fragmented Info on Jobs and Education Opportunities	Education to Workforce Pathways
Lack of childcare spots across income levels	In the midst of a worker shortage	Information and communication breakdowns between employers and potential employees about job opportunities	A lot of local educational opportunities that need clear communication and pathways built to local employers
Significant turnover in childcare workforce	Hourly pay has risen but not enough to keep up with inflation	Communication breakdowns result in lost opportunities for workers and employers	Benefits for students to go to postsecondary and technical education are often unknown and under-utilized
Fragmented nature of care makes it difficult for parents to be at work when their kids have no place to go	Cost of housing and food have made it difficult for families to make ends meet even when they are working 40+ hours a week	Fragmented information/difficult to navigate for educational programs and potential students	Students and future employees need guidance to the pathways that exist
Holiday/summer care also difficult to find and expensive	Difficult choices between insurance and benefits or other costs of living	Need for central hub for all to access education and job opportunities	More coordination between the technical colleges, vocational programs, and public schools are needed

LISTENING SESSION FINDINGS



Next Steps

The findings from AWP and secondary data, focus groups, and the listening session reinforce the critical importance of the work that need to be done in the areas of housing, behavioral health, arts and culture, food security, and workforce development. Across the five work topics, four themes emerged in terms of the *kinds* of actionable leadership Envision Athens can provide in moving the community forward. On the following page, each of the work groups action steps as determined by the evidence presented in this report.

1 Convene Partners

Envision Athens is uniquely positioned to convene partners and hold space for work that needs to be done in each work topic to make sure progress is made.

2 Build Awareness

Tackling complete problems demands that community members are educated and aware of the issues. Stakeholders and listening session attendants asked for Envision to play a key role in building awareness across work topics.

3 Focus on Youth

Advocacy and policy support for children and youth in each work topic area is a critical role Envision Athens can fill, according to these local data.

4 Cost of Living Connected to All Topics

The rising cost of living--especially outpacing wage growth-- was cited as a fundamental issue that was embedded in challenges across all work topics.

MURAL ARTISTS: ELIO MERCADO & BRODERICK FLANAGAN

ENVISION ATHENS

Work Topics

HOUSE

- Convening partners to address rising cost of living pertaining to housing for all Athenians
- Supporting educational opportunities in tenants' rights and housing vouchers for the Athens community
- Collaborating with planning and zoning policy development and how that relates to housing options

HEALTHY

- Addressing youth mental health and substance use disorder through prevention and intervention services
- Increasing access to behavioral health care for all
- Educating the community and supporting organizations combating substance use disorder

EDUCATE

- Advocating for additional child care options
- Increasing accessibility career pathways from training to employment
- Increasing accessibility for 2 nd chance employment

ABUNDANCE

- Expanding youth summer feeding programs
- Supporting efforts for food assistance programs
- Supporting database efforts for local food distribution

CREATE

- Supporting youth development programs within Clarke County School District to increase exposure to the arts
- Promotion of special events that are youth centric to increase exposure to the arts for all youth
- Increasing public awareness of the value of the arts in Athens



Acknowledgements



Thank you to all of the institutional stakeholders and community partners that have invested in Envision Athens and the Athens Wellbeing Project.

Sincere thank you to:

- Envision Athens Board Members
- Envision Athens Focus Group Participants September 2022
- Listening Session attendees in October 2022
- Athens Clarke-County Library, Synovus Athens, Athens Chamber of Commerce, and the Classic Center for allowing Envision Athens to host the focus groups and listening session at your location
- College of Public Health Students assisting in facilitating the listening session
- Graduate Research Assistants Kaitlyn Catapano, Abby Borden, and Nicole Register for assisting with note-taking during focus groups
- Athens Wellbeing Project Manager Rebecca Baskam
- Athens Area Community Foundation for championing the Athens Wellbeing Project

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