

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Georgia Systemic Change Alliance Publishes 3 Reports & 1 Case Study: Roadmap for Albany, Brunswick, Savannah, and Georgia

SAVANNAH, GA – Last summer, in response to the COVID-19 crisis that has deepened existing racial, social, and environmental disparities, four place-based networks emerged and united to launch the Georgia Systemic Change Alliance. The networks share three critical goals:

- Recovering, rebuilding, and reimagining systems and policies post-COVID.
- Advancing the movement for black lives and broader racial justice across systems and policies.
- Building internal muscle and infrastructure of networks for the short-term and long-term.

Today, the Alliance release reports for Albany, Brunswick, and Savannah. Each is a roadmap for systemic policy change, racial justice, and network-building. Over the next year, each network will implement the recommendations in their given reports. The Alliance also releases a case study about its behind-the-scenes-work, during a year of unprecedented challenges and opportunities in Georgia. [Read the Alliance Case Study](#).

[Register here](#) for the Alliance’s release event webinar on Monday, September 27 from 3:30pm-5pm.

Albany Network – “Reimagine Albany” – is led by the United Way of Southwest Georgia. This network launched in 2020, when Albany had the fourth highest rate of COVID per capita in the world. Its report includes recommendations for (1) housing, (2) education, and (3) health. [Read the Albany Report](#).

Brunswick Network – “Community First Planning Commission” – is led by a long-standing collaboration of 18 black churches and allies called Community First. It has been convening for over a decade and deepened their efforts over the summer in the wake of the murder of Mr. Ahmaud Arbery. Its report includes recommendations for (1) criminal justice and (2) environmental justice. [Read the Brunswick Report](#).

Savannah Network – “Racial Equity and Leadership [REAL] Task Force” – is led by the Mayor’s Office. Savannah Mayor, Van Johnson, announced the Task Force in 2020 and appointed former Savannah Mayor, Dr. Otis Johnson, as chair. Over 30 cross-sector members collaborated. Its report includes recommendations for (1) criminal justice, (2) economic empowerment and wealth development, (3) education, (4) environmental justice, (5) health, and (6) housing. [Read the Savannah Report](#).

Statewide Network – “Just Georgia Coalition” – is led by the NAACP of Georgia and includes formal partnerships with Black Voters Matter, New Georgia Project, Southern Center for Human Rights, Working Families, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, and Black Male Voter Project. Instead of a report, its leaders and partners have already developed a [website with plans and demands](#).

To support this work, The Sapelo Foundation committed \$800,000 as a grant-making partner. It built relationships with leaders from all four networks, helped identify common goals and needs, and approved two-year grants to all four networks in the Alliance. A \$50,000 matching grant is provided to each network to support fundraising and implementing recommendations. The Georgia-based Partnership for Southern Equity was selected to manage and coordinate activities.

“The Alliance allows the REAL Savannah Task Force to inform and learn from the social change efforts of Albany, Brunswick, and the NAACP of Georgia. Together we are learning how to identify common goals and how systemic change is achieved,” said Dr. Otis Johnson, former mayor of Savannah and REAL Taskforce Lead. “Members of the Alliance are participating in a learning lab about how to identify and analyze values, policies, strategies, tactics, and practices that lead to real systemic change. Each network is benefiting by learning about both the common and unique experiences of Alliance members. This will be shared in a case study developed by PSE. Each member of the Alliance will be stronger as a result of this collaboration.”

“The best is truly yet to come, and we are beyond grateful that The Sapelo Foundation took a chance on us,” said Shaunae Motley, President & CEO of the United Way of Southwest Georgia. “Equity work is indeed a journey and we are only in the beginning phases. As we’ve worked with PSE in finalizing our final report, I personally didn’t realize how far we’ve come! Through this process, we’ve acknowledged that successful outcomes will manifest in different forms, including better internal policies, stronger community results, and improved relationships and processes.”

About The Partnership for Southern Equity (PSE)

Based in Atlanta, PSE (www.psequity.org) is nonprofit organization that advances policies and institutional actions that promote racial equity and shared prosperity for all in the growth of metropolitan Atlanta and the American South. Through forums, research, and organizing efforts, PSE brings together the regional community to lift up and encourage just, sustainable, and civic practices for balanced growth and opportunity.

About The Sapelo Foundation

The Sapelo Foundation (www.sapelofoundation.org) is based in Savannah, Georgia and works statewide, with a mission to strive for a just Georgia, through partnerships and solutions that increase environmental protection, social prosperity, and civic power.

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