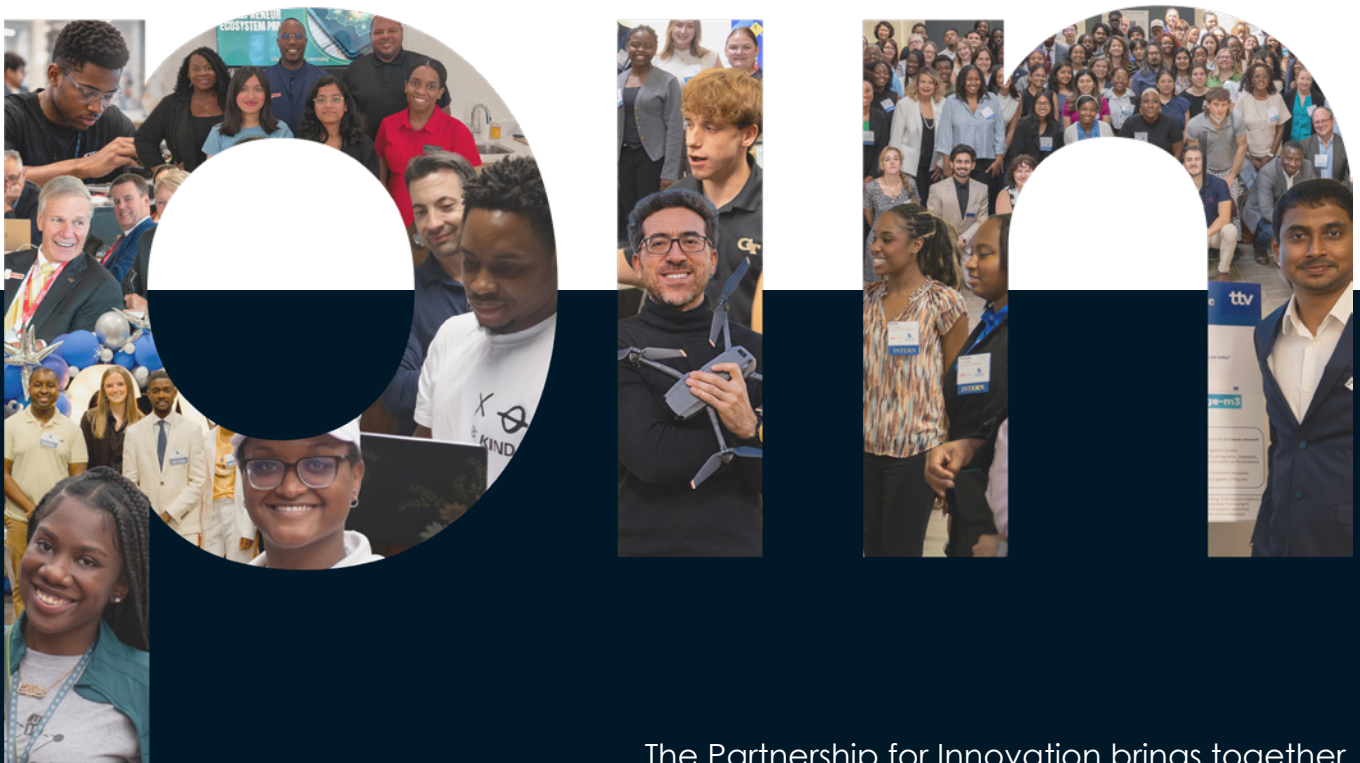
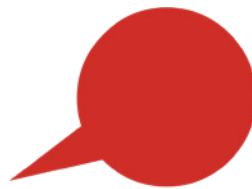
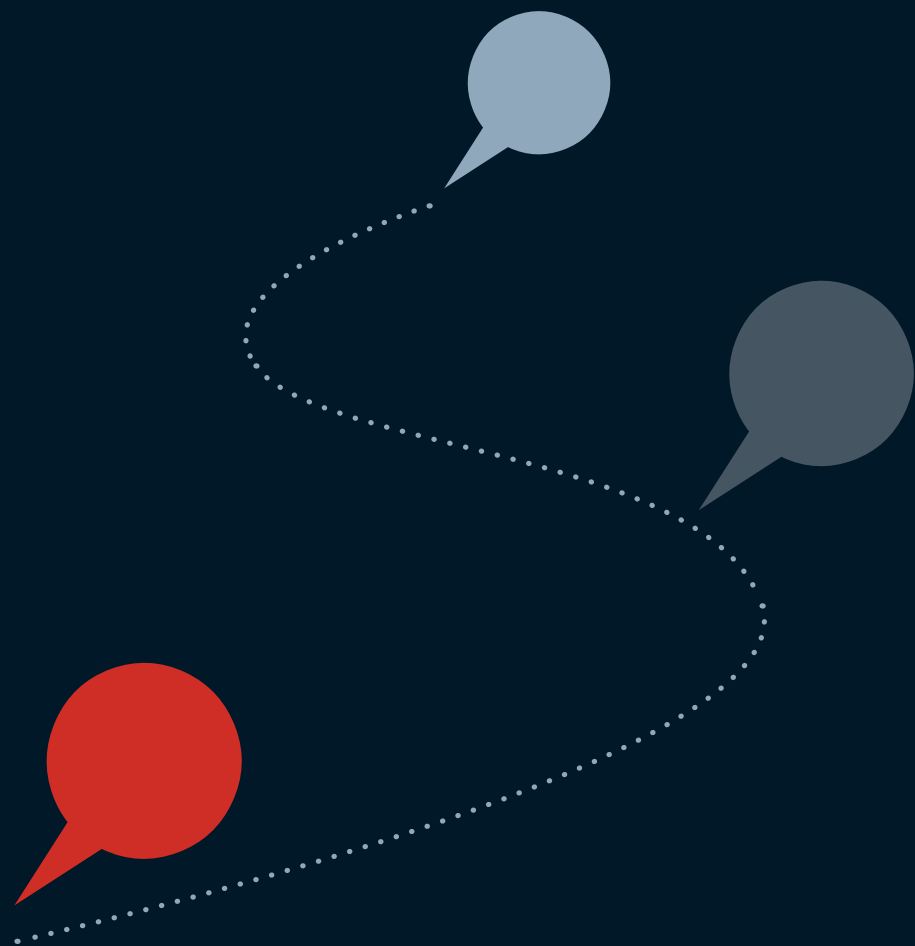


Connecting Innovation to **IMPACT**



The Partnership for Innovation brings together community priorities, promising solutions, emerging talent, and long-term investment to build lasting community and economic value.

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Leadership Letter

For six years, the Partnership for Innovation (PIN) has been connecting innovation and strengthening communities across Georgia and the Southeast. That work has led to this very moment: in 2026 alone, we advanced more than one-third of our projects to date. Our focus is now on providing the patient capital and discipline to turn promising solutions into lasting community and economic value.

That began with the launch of PIN's Community Investment Program and its capital engine, the PIN Fund. Unlike a traditional grant or a one-time check, the fund is designed to recycle its own returns. Every investment is first tested through deployment with a community partner, and when the startup succeeds, the returns flow back into the fund to finance what comes next. Lamarr.AI and Safe Road Solutions are proof of that cycle in motion: both started as proven PIN research partners and are now part of PIN's investment portfolio, which has already assessed 25 physical assets and corridors and secured \$500,000 in additional funding and investments.

We have seen what this kind of model can do. Since 2020, PIN has launched more than 330 projects across nine states and Washington, DC. We have turned an initial \$7 million investment into more than \$37.2 million in additional funding, generating 5X in total project value for every dollar invested.

That growth extends to our talent pipeline. Our Emerging Innovators cohort of paid PIN Interns and Fellows grew to a record 149 participants, a 33% increase over last year, representing 37 colleges and universities, 14 states, 15 countries, and more than 30 languages. For the first time,

that cohort includes mid-to-late-career professionals working alongside early-career fellows and college students, all contributing to the same community-focused projects that advance innovation across the region.

This year, Board Chair Chris Womack traveled to Greenville, Alabama — a small town that has always punched above its weight — to see one of our summer internship projects in partnership with 2150 Center for Innovation, Commercialization & Growth. For Nezhiah Burrell, that meant returning to the town where her grandparents live to support outreach for Butler Gardens, a new event venue.

The experience allowed her “to slow down and appreciate a different way of life” while deepening a relationship with her grandparents – “something I will always treasure.” She also saw the project's larger promise: creating a place that brings people together and supports Greenville's long-term economic growth.

2026 changed how we think about capital. The challenge was never a shortage of ideas. It was the gap between promising innovation and real-world adoption. PIN closes that gap by connecting ventures with communities, emerging talent, capital, and implementation support to create lasting value.

To our team, board members, and 118 cross-sector partners: thank you for making this progress possible. Because of your leadership and commitment, PIN is positioned to deepen its work in Georgia and extend proven approaches across the South.

A network ready to carry impact forward.



Debra Lam

Founding Executive Director,
Partnership for Innovation



Chris Womack

Board Chair, Partnership for Innovation
Chairman, President and Chief
Executive Officer, Southern Company

Across these communities, PIN has built relationships, gained practical experience, and connected talent to real-world challenges, creating a stronger foundation for new ideas to take root.

This year, PIN launched the PIN Fund, a new way to support promising solutions with long-term capital and help more communities benefit from what works.

Six Years of Building What Moves Ideas Forward

PIN began by connecting communities, universities, businesses, government, and emerging talent around shared challenges. Over six years, those relationships grew into a network with the trust, expertise, implementation experience, and capital to help promising ideas move from possibility to real-world use.

Six years of milestones show how PIN expanded its reach, deepened its partnerships, and built the model it operates today.



2020

- PIN established and announced at Atlanta Rotary Club
- Debra Lam named Founding Executive Director
- G.P. "Bud" Peterson, PhD, named Board Chair

2022

- First year of measurable outcomes
- 30+ active projects
- Launch of PIN Fellowship

2023

- Chris Womack named Board Chair
- Christian Charnaux named Vice Chair
- Projects in all 12 Georgia economic development districts
- First project outside Georgia

2024

- PIN-supported work earns three international honors: two Smart21 awards and one Smart 20 award
- PIN Southeast regional expansion
- PIN Intern alumni becomes a host partner and hires a PIN Intern

2025

- 77 projects across 5 states
- 200th PIN Intern hired
- 220 innovation projects delivered

2026

- Heather Fortner named Vice Chair
- The PIN Fund launched
- Record cohort of 149 active Emerging Innovators and 440+ alumni



Return on Impact

The Evidence

In 2026, PIN advanced work across communities while building on six years of partnerships, investment, and reach. These figures show this year's activity alongside PIN's cumulative impact since launch.

2026 PIN-WIDE

115
community-centered innovation projects advanced

118
cross-sector partners engaged

689
technology and innovation units deployed

61
counties across six states

SINCE LAUNCH

\$37.2M
unlocked

170+
counties reached across nine states and Washington, DC

365
engagements

12
awards

How PIN Moves Innovation to Impact

Two pillars. One connected model.

Solutions, talent, capital, and community priorities each exist on their own. What they usually lack is a shared pathway. PIN's two pillars are built to provide it.



Emerging Innovators

Connects emerging talent to meaningful projects where their skills can make a difference.

Emerging Innovators connects PIN Interns and Fellows with applied work across sectors. PIN supports recruiting, matching, professional development, and program coordination, while partner organizations provide project supervision, mentorship, and meaningful work.

For participants

Paid applied experience, mentorship, professional networks, and clearer career paths.

94%

positive career influence for interns

25

intern workshops and events

For partner organizations

Skilled project support, access to emerging talent, and a lower-risk way to evaluate future employees.

93%

satisfied with intern contribution

88%

would host or hire again

In 2026, Emerging Innovators connected 149 participants from 37 colleges and universities to meaningful, applied work. Across the participant cohort, 49% were Pell-eligible and 37% were first-generation students. PIN's broader alumni network now includes 440+ alumni.

Community Investment

Connects community priorities with the technology, expertise, and support needed to act on them.

Community Investment connects community priorities with promising solutions, capital, and implementation support. Through the PIN Fund and Community Deployment, PIN helps communities and startups test what works, build evidence, and move solutions toward sustained use.

PIN Fund

Provides long-term capital to help promising early-stage solutions move further.

The Fund pairs that investment with the community relationships, implementation support, and talent already built into PIN's model, helping the work continue beyond an initial project.

Community Deployment

Engages communities and startups to test and shape promising technology in real-world settings. The PIN Studio provides hands-on management and implementation support that helps partners coordinate deployment, learn from real-world use, and move beyond the pilot stage.

5

Communities served or impacted

25

Physical assets and corridors assessed

\$500K

Funding and capital secured

In 2026, Community Investment engaged more than 700 people and contributed to work in which startups expanded headcount and secured additional funding.



When they connect

Community Investment helps communities test and strengthen promising solutions. Emerging Innovators brings talent into that work. Together, they connect the people, expertise, and resources that turn innovation into impact.

Connected Impact

How connection becomes impact.

A good project can make a real difference. But when the right people stay connected, share what they know, and keep building on what works, that difference can reach further and last longer.

Connecting Local Systems

For entrepreneurs, connection starts with being able to find and use the support they need.

Macon-Bibb County, Georgia:

Better connecting the support already there

Christele Parham, an entrepreneur and executive director of MBT Collective, understood the years-long challenge: Macon-Bibb entrepreneurs needed help, and while much of that help already existed, finding the right resource or next step was difficult. An early ecosystem assessment identified more than 150 organizations serving entrepreneurs, but information about their services was fragmented and difficult to navigate.

Christele's relationship with PIN had already grown through several engagements, from helping host a PIN event and joining the PIN Regional Leaders Program to working with PIN Interns on her organization's accelerator. That history helped set the stage for the Macon-Bibb Entrepreneur Ecosystem Project, or MBEEP.

The initiative brings together the MBEEP Alliance, a digital platform designed to help entrepreneurs find the right resources and a regional convening where partners can learn from one another. The first Alliance convening brought together approximately 20 ecosystem partners, while broader outreach reached more than 50 entrepreneurs and business owners.



For Christele, PIN's staying power matters:

"They have been intentional about cultivating a relationship rather than coming and leaving."

—Christele Parham

PIN has since connected Christele with ecosystem builders in Mississippi and Louisiana, with related conversations extending into Alabama and Tennessee.

Danville, Virginia:

The answer started with listening

In Danville, listening surfaced the same disconnect. Resources existed, but they were not always easy to find or access, and the city wanted to better understand the barriers Black-owned businesses were facing.

Through Project Black Business Impact, PIN Interns visited or interviewed more than 50 Black-owned businesses and collected 50 survey responses across 16 industries. Their findings pointed to needs around funding, marketing, and growth, along with gaps in awareness and coordination.

That feedback helped shape a stronger Small Business Network with the Danville Pittsylvania Chamber of Commerce and Letterpress Communications, including governance tools, a resource directory, and a funding tracker. More than 130 people attended the launch this year.



Henry County, Georgia:

Bringing local business connections into one place

In Henry County, the need was more direct. Local talent and employers needed a better way to find one another, but the information connecting them was scattered across too many places.

PIN Interns, Gracian Williams and Subramanya Hariprasad, worked with the Henry County Chamber of Commerce to develop HenryHub.work, a digital workspace that brings business resources together. Its "Gig Connector" helps local contractors share qualifications while giving employers a clearer way to find and evaluate local talent.

The interns also built the foundation for a quarterly Business Confidence Index, with a survey tool and Power BI dashboard prototype designed to track business confidence, hiring expectations, investment sentiment, and sales activity.



Each place responded to a local need in its own way, turning scattered support into clearer paths for entrepreneurs.

Relationships that Build Capacity

As relationships deepen over time, one project can create opportunities for what comes next.

Georgia Native Sites: One project became an ongoing partnership

The Georgia Council on American Indian Concerns has long worked to expand understanding of Native Americans in Georgia through permanent signage, “Teaching Trunks,” and other educational resources. The Georgia Native Sites Project created another way to extend that work, bringing Native history, site information, and educational materials together in an accessible digital StoryMap.

In summer 2025, the Council began working with PIN through a project supported by two PIN Interns. PIN connected the Council with strong candidates. New South Associates provided supervision, technical tools, and guidance from archaeologists and anthropologists, while the Council brought its knowledge of tribal heritage, cultural context, and the priorities behind the work.

Across two summers, four interns researched Native sites, developed historical and visitor information, created K–12 resources, and gained hands-on experience with ArcGIS StoryMaps. Their learning extended beyond the technical work. One intern attended the Council’s Native Night at an Atlanta Braves game, where they met members of Georgia’s three state-recognized tribes, Council representatives, and state leaders, connecting the project to the people and living cultures behind it.

Christian Dane, program manager for the Georgia Council on American Indian Concerns, sees that ability to bring people together as one of PIN’s strengths:

“They’re able to connect different entities from different industries and fields together.”
—Christian Dane

What began as a one-time project continued into a second summer, allowing a new pair of interns to build on work already underway. For the relatively small Council, that extra support of two interns made a meaningful difference. Dane said the project would likely have taken significantly longer without the interns and might not have reached the same level of quality.

The Council now has a stronger digital platform for sharing its educational work, and the interns gained technical experience, mentorship and exposure to cultural and civic leaders. The Council plans to add the 2026 StoryMap iteration to its website once necessary approvals are complete.

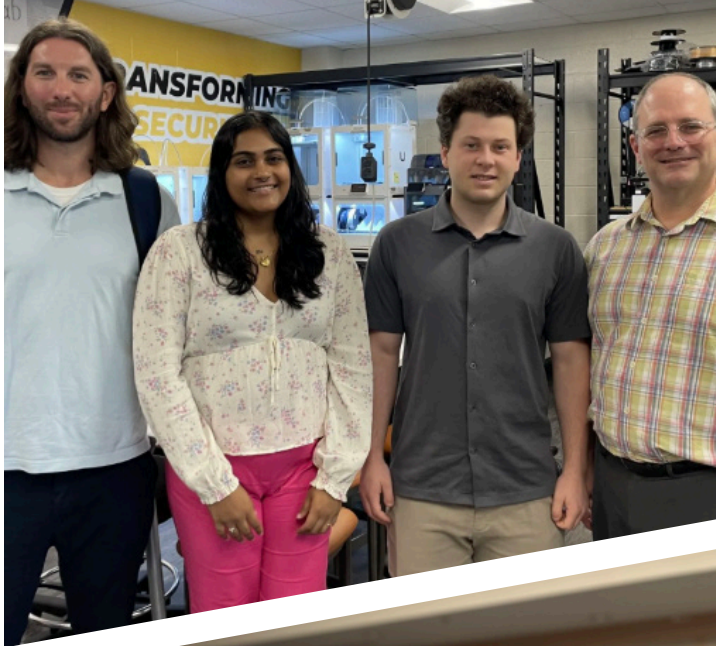
Fitzgerald Foundation + Mental Health 911: A partnership that kept expanding

Mental Health 911 began as a Kennesaw State University research project supported by PIN Interns. For two years, those interns helped the team refine the technology and move the work forward. As the project developed, PIN secured funding from the Betty and Davis Fitzgerald Foundation (Fitzgerald Foundation) that extended the internship support for another two years.

That additional time gave the project room to keep evolving. The team continued improving the technology, testing it with responders, engaging additional agencies, and moving toward commercialization through TechnovativeAI.

The relationship then expanded, the Fitzgerald Foundation became a PIN partner organization through its own Measuring What Matters project. Two data analyst interns helped the Foundation build four reusable databases, a prototype dashboard, data-quality documentation, and reporting tools across its 21-county service area.

What began with interns supporting one research project became a longer chain of relationships. PIN helped strengthen Mental Health 911, the Fitzgerald Foundation helped extend that work, and the Fitzgerald Foundation later brought PIN talent inside its own organization.



TECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENT

Refined and tested
Mental Health 911
with responders



STRONGER INFRASTRUCTURE

Built four reusable
databases, a dashboard,
and reporting tools for 21
counties



EXPANDED OPPORTUNITY

PIN talent embedded
inside the Fitzgerald
Foundation

Photo: Jason Augustine of J. August Media



Across both stories, an early engagement became a foundation for continued work. Each step carried more knowledge, trust, and opportunity forward.

Capacity That Accumulates in Place

Over time, each project leaves behind skills, tools, and local knowledge that strengthen what comes next.

Greenville, Alabama: Building on what is already there

In Greenville, one project is preserving local history while another is strengthening a local business. Together, they are helping build the relationships, skills, and visibility needed to support future growth. For years, Veronica Womack, PhD, has worked to advance economic development across Alabama's Black Belt by connecting communities, local assets, and new opportunities for growth. PIN partnered with 2150 Innovate and Dr. Womack, PIN's Emerging Innovator Partner of the Year, to launch two digital placemaking projects in Greenville.

PIN Intern Taylor Thicklin worked with Dr. Womack to document Greenville's history through digital storytelling, creating materials that support preservation, education, and future economic development. PIN Intern Nezhia Burrell supported Butler Gardens, a local event venue, through website development, digital marketing, community outreach, and event support.

The projects also brought residents, community leaders, interns, and partners together to explore

Photo: City of Greenville, AL



Greenville's future and identify opportunities for continued collaboration.

"PIN helped bring the right people into the same room around Greenville's future. That meeting would not have happened without PIN, and the connections made there are ones we can continue building on."

—Dr. Veronica Womack

Together, these efforts are helping lay the foundation for growth in local entrepreneurship and startups. They also reflect PIN's growing partnerships in Alabama, building on local leadership and creating new opportunities for innovation and community development across the region.

The Bean Path: Turning information into a tool for better decisions

In Jackson, Mississippi, The Bean Path already had years of community programming and data. PIN Intern, Amara Stovall, helped make that information more useful by organizing survey data, analyzing trends, and creating reports for leadership and funders. During AI Month, she helped collect and

analyze feedback across six events. The findings informed plans for youth surveys, more hands-on formats, and age-tiered activities in 2027. She also documented data practices and protocols so staff and future interns could continue the work after the summer ended.



Georgia Foundation for Public Education (GFPE): When an intern becomes part of the team

At GFPE, Emma Jow helped evaluate grant programs, create the first PEACH Education Tax Credit report, produce ROI analyses, and strengthen how the organization communicated the impact of its funding.

Her contribution continued beyond the summer. Emma stayed on with GFPE as a part-time employee for the 2026–27 school year.



The lasting value is what remains. Stronger local knowledge, better systems and experienced people give communities and organizations more to build on.

Moving Innovation into Practice and Carrying It Forward

Promising ideas create lasting value when they can move into real-world use and keep going.

Lamarr.AI: From research to real-world use

Lamarr.AI grew out of research led in part by Georgia Tech professor and company co-founder, Tarek Rakha, PhD, whose work focused on retrofit design for buildings in underserved communities. PIN supported that early work several years ago through a Community Research grant. As the research developed into a company, the relationship evolved with it.

Lamarr.AI uses drones, infrared imaging, and artificial intelligence to identify building-envelope problems and retrofit opportunities, which Dr. Rakha describes as “giving a building an MRI.”

PIN later invested in the company and helped open doors to public-sector applications. Together, that investment and community access gave Lamarr.AI more opportunities to test its technology in real settings. Dr. Rakha said those connections changed how the company thought about where its technology could be useful:

“Partnership for Innovation opened our eyes to opportunities to work with the government, and PIN began opening doors through its relationships and network. That helped us see how our technology could be useful in new ways and create opportunities to work with cities and neighborhoods.”

—Dr. Tarek Rakha

In Savannah, Lamarr.AI assessed four municipal facilities. After reviewing the findings, the city asked the company to take Fire Station Headquarters from an initial assessment to a deeper audit with energy modeling, repair priorities, and ROI context. The work projected 5.95% whole-building energy savings from identified improvements and up to 11.45% when paired with window upgrades.

As the deployments expanded to Augusta, Lamarr.AI added staff and generated additional revenue. Across both communities, 16 buildings were assessed or scanned.

PIN also enabled Lamarr.AI to host two summer interns, Jose Chavez and Prachi, who contributed to market research, pricing, go-to-market strategy, automation, and customer development.

The work demonstrates how community deployment can help promising technologies build the evidence, relationships, and momentum needed to scale.



ThermoVerse: Building the proof for broader use

PIN Fellows Paixun Lin and Khush Kapadia helped strengthen testing and connect LATCHES™ thermal-storage technology with building-automation systems. Their work also supported safety-certification planning, commercial deployment, and contractor programs for broader adoption.

ThermoVerse reports that the work advanced LATCHES™ from Technology Readiness Level 4, validation in a laboratory environment, to Level 7, demonstration in an operational environment.



Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC): Turning plans into measurable progress

For the ARC, implementation began with measurement. The agency needed to turn regional plans into something communities could track and act on.

PIN Interns, Palak Mor and John Yilu, created standardized workflows and 22 implementation metrics across eight sectors, covering 180 local governments and supporting two regional plans. They documented the process so ARC staff or future interns could continue updating the metrics.



Connecting the right people, expertise, and resources helped promising work move into use and continue beyond the original project.

Stewarding for Sustainability

Financial Statement

Responsible stewardship sustains today's work and creates capacity for what comes next.

EXPENSES	2024	2025	2026
Operations	\$563,066.28	\$554,977.19	\$753,647.87
Student Engagement	\$741,152.89	\$987,021.95	\$1,089,074.68
Community Research	\$596,312.10	\$748,908.37	\$530,179.07
Workforce Development	\$804,127.42	\$634,779.36	\$830,270.19
Economic Opportunity	\$304,733.13	\$585,183.63	\$459,694.24
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$3,009,391.82	\$3,510,870.50	\$3,662,866.05

REVENUE + SUPPORT	2024	2025	2026
Georgia Tech	\$281,079.00	\$377,736.61	\$382,612.54
State of Georgia	\$1,669,228.00	\$1,669,228.00	\$1,669,228.00
Earned Revenue	\$139,000.00	\$84,493.43	\$720,054.52
Private Sector Contributions	\$643,891.56	\$1,011,720.64	\$560,000.00
Sponsored	\$346,872.11	\$446,253.00	\$638,157.90
Philanthropy	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$105,000.00
TOTAL REVENUE	\$3,180,070.67	\$3,689,431.68	\$4,075,052.96

Investing in What Comes Next

The PIN Fund invests in solutions that demonstrate value in real communities. Each deployment helps a community address a priority challenge while providing startups with the evidence, relationships, and operational experience needed to grow.

Lamarr.AI

Reducing energy waste and improving capital planning

Through deployments in Savannah and Augusta, Lamarr.AI helped public-sector facilities identify building performance issues that are often difficult to detect through traditional inspections. Community partners received building-specific analysis that helped prioritize maintenance investments, evaluate retrofit opportunities, and improve energy performance.



Safe Road Solutions

Helping communities identify roadway risks before crashes occur

Safe Road Solutions deployed AI-powered roadway analytics to help transportation agencies identify potentially hazardous roadway curves and prioritize safety improvements. By lowering the cost of roadway assessment, the technology enables communities to evaluate more roadways and make data-informed infrastructure decisions.



When a solution proves itself in one community, the PIN Fund helps it reach the next.

Carrying Impact Forward

Find your place in the work.

What began as a vision has grown into a network of communities, innovators, partners, and emerging talent working together to solve real-world challenges. As that network continues to grow, so does the opportunity to create lasting impact.

Join Us

Identify a **community priority**

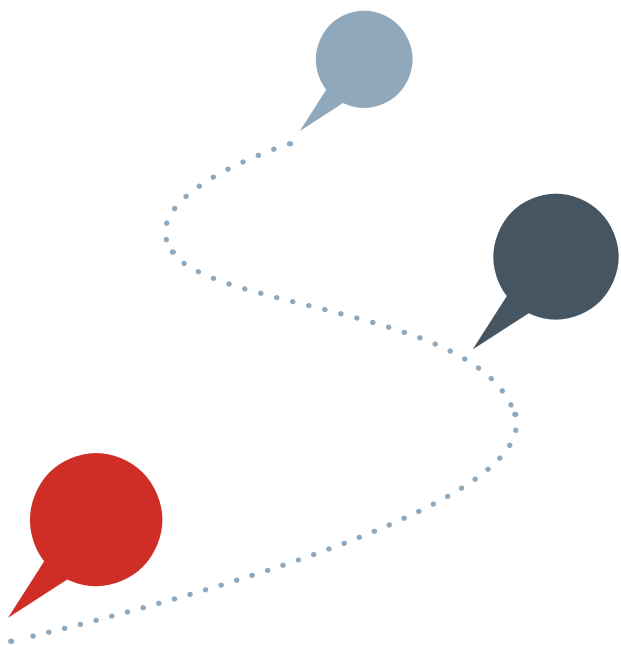
Bring a local challenge to PIN, and we'll connect it with the talent, expertise, and solutions to address it.

Employ **emerging talent**

Host PIN Interns or Fellows for skilled project support and an early look at future employees.

Invest in **promising solutions**

Support the PIN Fund to help proven solutions reach more communities.



Visit our website to learn more, get involved, or start a conversation.
2026impact.pingeorgia.org
pin@innovate.gatech.edu

Thank you

PIN's work is built by many hands. We are grateful to the board members, team, and partners who contribute their expertise, trust, resources, and commitment, and who help communities turn priorities into action and lasting value.

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Georgia Senate District 56

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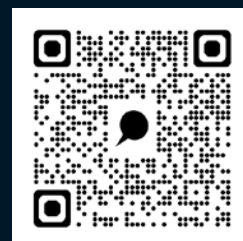
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