



## COVID-19 Response Fund Deploys Dollars to Tech Schools

**ATHENS, Ga. (Dec. 8, 2020)** – Athens Technical College and Lanier Technical College received a combined \$50,000 from the COVID-19 Community Response Fund, to help with efforts to continue training the next generation workforce. This fifth deployment of funds provides direct financial assistance to students at these technical colleges facing hardship. These colleges welcome students from across the 12-county region at their various physical locations in Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Elbert, Greene and Jackson counties.

Due to COVID-19, many current students enrolled at these institutions are facing obstacles to complete their training and education. This round of funding will help minimize barriers, including providing help with transportation, work-study programs, book costs, and more. Ensuring students complete their programs means supporting a strong future workforce.

The fund, hosted by the Athens Area Community Foundation in partnership with United Way of Northeast Georgia, continues to focus on aiding organizations with immediate relief aid and recovery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, donors have contributed more than \$416,000 and \$318,000 has been distributed during five rounds of funding. The COVID-19 Community Response Fund works with donors from across the region and beyond to provide support in the 12 counties United Way of Northeast Georgia covers.

“Nationwide, community and technical colleges have experienced a significant decline in enrollment due to the pandemic. Financial concerns, childcare availability, internet access, and other barriers have factored into this decline. Declines in technical college enrollment will have a negative effect on the future of available, skilled workers. It is important to help students get to and through post-secondary education,” said Sarah McKinney, President and CEO of the Athens Area Community Foundation. “This investment in two, trusted educational institutions will go a long way to support students during the pandemic.”

“The training that these technical institutions provide is invaluable to the students and our whole region,” said Kay Keller, president and CEO of United Way of Northeast Georgia. “By removing barriers that prohibit students from completing their programs, we can ensure our next round of graduates can enter into the workforce with the knowledge, experience and preparedness they need to create a lasting career here in our community.”

The Athens Area Community Foundation and United Way of Northeast Georgia are grateful for the financial stewardship of more than 380 individuals, organizations, and businesses. We are especially thankful for the major gifts and contributions from Betty and Davis Fitzgerald Foundation, CareSource Foundation, First American Bank & Trust, Foundation for the Carolinas, George A. Ramlose Foundation, Georgia Power Foundation, Ross & Leigh Campbell with Georgia Skin Cancer & Aesthetic Dermatology, Saint-Gobain Corporation Foundation, South State Bank, The Caterpillar Foundation, The Hanover Insurance Group Foundation, The Huffer Foundation, The Wilbur and Hilda Glenn Family Foundation, Truist, Zeist Foundation, and Athens Area Community Foundation Fundholders.

The fund is still open and accepting donations. Anyone can help by making a donation to the COVID-19 Community Response Fund. To make a donation, please visit [www.athensareacf.org](http://www.athensareacf.org). Funds are granted to highest needs areas and to organizations based on data and community insights and assessments. The funding is not restricted to current United Way of Northeast Georgia- or other collective nonprofit-funded organizations.

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#### **ABOUT ATHENS AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

The history of the Athens Area Community Foundation is rooted in the trusted leadership of community members focused on expanding our ability to serve as a public grantmaking foundation partnering with donors, nonprofits, and institutions to grow, preserve, and share philanthropic assets. Its stated mission is **“to help passionate donors leave permanent legacies, foster strategic philanthropy, and shape effective responses to community needs through collaboration.”** Serving Barrow, Clarke, Jackson, Madison, Oconee, and Oglethorpe counties. For more information about the Athens Area Community Foundation, please visit [www.athensareacf.org](http://www.athensareacf.org).

#### **ABOUT UNITED WAY OF NORTHEAST GEORGIA**

Since 1954, United Way of Northeast Georgia has been helping families and individuals in need. United Way of Northeast Georgia is a local 501(c)(3) nonprofit that motivates and mobilizes resources to meet the highest priority needs of families and individuals in Northeast Georgia. With a Community Impact model, United Way of Northeast Georgia strategically funds programs that move the needle in three focus areas: basic needs, early childhood success, and workforce development. By working with leaders and community members across our region, we can focus on improving conditions for all of our neighbors in our twelve counties which include: Banks, Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Franklin, Greene, Hart, Jackson, Madison, Morgan, Oconee and Oglethorpe. For more information about United Way of Northeast Georgia, please visit [www.unitedwaynega.org](http://www.unitedwaynega.org).