# Foundation for Social Connection

# Impact Report

## 2025

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# From
# Our Team

As we reflect on 2025, we are reminded once again of the extraordinary resilience that connection brings — especially in a year marked by both new challenges and changing landscapes. The funding environment for nonprofits has shifted dramatically. Federal dollars are harder to secure, competition for grants has intensified, and many communities are feeling the strain. Yet even amid these pressures, one truth has never been clearer: **the need for belonging and connection in our communities has never been greater.**

This year, we continued advancing the strategic plan we launched last year — deepening our impact, strengthening partnerships, and laying the groundwork to **reach 27 communities by 2027.** We expanded programs that equip local leaders with the tools, coaching, and evidence needed to take action. We brought new sectors and voices into this movement, diversifying the stakeholders committed to advancing social connection. And we helped build trust and belonging through community-led plans that bring people together in meaningful, lasting ways.

In the pages that follow, you will see how your support of our work and mission continues to drive meaningful progress: strengthening local leadership, forging innovative partnerships, and advancing a national commitment to social connection as essential to collective well-being.

Thank you for being part of this journey. **Together, we are building a vibrant society where social connection is at the heart of how we live.**

— The Foundation for Social Connection (F4SC) team

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# Strategic Plan Updates

Last year, we launched our **2024-2027 Strategic Plan** — providing a clear roadmap for advancing social connection through three intertwined pillars of work — Research and Practice, Network and Partnerships, and Storytelling and Communications. Across these pillars, we have taken bold action to strengthen communities, foster collaboration, and amplify impact. Below are highlights of the strategic progress we've made in 2025 and the momentum and capacity we're building.

| | Objective | Output |
|---|---|---|
| **Research and Practice** | Publish our first Scientific Leadership Council consensus and position statement | • *The Need for Scientific Leadership and Collaboration to Enhance Social Connection: A Call to Action* |
| | Create and test new dissemination templates for reports, research newsletters, and best practice toolkits | • Navigating Generative AI and Youth Social Connection<br>• The Roadmap<br>• *The Weekly Connect* |
| **Network and Partnerships** | Conduct a comprehensive assessment of organizations, including their expertise, resources, and commitment to addressing social isolation, loneliness, and social connection (SILC) issues | • US SILC Ecosystem Map |
| **Storytelling and Communications** | Launch an Ambassador Program to unite leaders nationwide in driving narrative change and evidence-based impact | • F4SC Ambassador Program |

## Capacity Building

F4SC strengthened its governance and expertise with the addition of Chris Appleton to our Board of Directors this year. As Founder and CEO of Art Pharmacy, Chris brings nationally recognized leadership, deep experience in social prescribing, and a commitment to collaboration and systemic change that enhances F4SC's ability to advance social connection nationwide.

We are also building capacity for 2026 with the addition of Rakeea Chesick Gordis, who brings deep experience in community-building, mediation, and dialogue facilitation. As Associate Program Manager for Community Initiatives, Rakeea will support our work with the Action Guide for Building Socially Connected Communities.

# Research & Practice

Guiding our Research and Practice pillar is the belief that implementing strategies, policies, and programs that are rooted in evidence is essential to achieving a socially connected society. Through research publications, practical tools designed for local action, and impact evaluation, we helped translate the science of connection into local and national change.

## Our Scientific Leadership Council

In 2025, F4SC's **Scientific Leadership Council** (SLC) — made up of leading researchers, clinicians, and practitioners in the field — continued to elevate social connection as a priority at the local and national levels, grounded in evidence. Featured on NPR's Academic Minute, the group published its first joint paper, The Need for Scientific Leadership and Collaboration to Enhance Social Connection: A Call to Action in the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, which set a unifying vision for the field. This includes promoting interdisciplinary scientific collaboration, identifying evidence gaps, and harmonizing measurement at the national level.

From piloting measurement tools that assess the impact of social connection interventions to informing how organizations promote connection and address isolation and loneliness through their products, the SLC's efforts are reshaping how all levels of society understand, prioritize, measure, and advance social connection.

In 2026, the SLC will continue to close the gap between evidence and implementation through initiatives such as advancing their national research agenda and building the knowledge base through their respective research projects. As the group brings in diverse perspectives across subject areas, it will strengthen its ability to translate research into sustainable, population-level improvements in social connection and well-being.

**Dr. Julianne Holt-Lunstad (Chair)**
Professor of Psychology & Neuroscience
Brigham Young University

**Dr. Carla Perissinotto (Vice Chair)**
Professor of Medicine
University of California, San Francisco

**Dr. Thomas Cudjoe**
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Johns Hopkins University

**Dr. Matthew Lee Smith**
Professor
Texas A&M University

**Dr. Mark Van Ryzin**
Associate Research Professor
University of Oregon

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Associate Professor of Pediatrics in
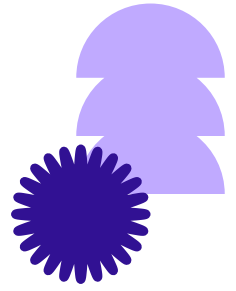Psychiatry, Columbia University

**Dr. Milena Batanova**
Director of Research & Evaluation
Making Caring Common

## Expanding the Council

This year, we expanded the SLC to welcome Dr. Milena Batanova, Director of Research & Evaluation at Making Caring Common at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her multidisciplinary experience — spanning social-emotional learning, adolescent resilience, and mental health practice — further diversifies the expertise represented on the Council and strengthens our ability to advance connection across the lifespan.

### Driving the Narrative on Tech

SLC members explored how AI, LLMs, and tech-supported interventions can strengthen social connection across diverse contexts, including educational settings, geriatric care, social media, and group communication. Their work offers essential guidance for decision-makers in a rapidly evolving technological landscape where many interventions lack rigorous evaluation. With more research underway on generative AI in 2026, the SLC is helping ensure that innovation in this space is informed by evidence — supporting responsible adoption and long-term, measurable impact.

## Prioritizing At-Risk Populations

Members advanced research across the lifespan, strengthening evidence on early relational health as a foundation for lifelong wellbeing with a new NASEM report, identifying effective school-based practices that improve academic and mental health outcomes, and testing low-burden, scalable interventions for older adults such as telephone companionship and hearing supports. SLC research this year also examined how race, socioeconomic status, disability, caregiving roles, and health conditions shape experiences of isolation and loneliness. Together, this work is helping ensure interventions are more targeted, equitable, and responsive.

### Shaping Policy and Systems

SLC members informed landmark international frameworks — including a World Health Organization report and OECD recommendations — embedding social connection into policy agendas and highlighting the importance of strengthening connection rather than simply reducing loneliness. They also improved understanding of how to implement systems-level solutions like social prescribing by identifying provider barriers, refining screening protocols, and developing pathways for broader integration into healthcare. Further, through involvement in Commit to Connect's 2025 Community of Practice, they equipped practitioners with validated measurement tools they developed to strengthen social connection outcomes for older adults and people with disabilities.

## Advancing Measurement

In 2025, the SLC advanced how social isolation, loneliness, and connection are measured across the lifespan. Their research highlighted that relational factors — like social support, family ties, and community context — are distinct from material hardship and need intentional, separate measurement. Systematic review researching older adults further demonstrated that strong social connections are linked to better physical health, underscoring the need for consistent, valid measures beyond single-item screens. This growing consensus on comprehensive measurement will be further advanced at our *Building Consensus* convening in March 2026.

**Explore More SLC Research**

# The Action Guide

The **Action Guide for Building Socially Connected Communities** walks local leaders through a structured process: reflecting on their community's current state of connectedness, analyzing data, authentically engaging residents, developing coordinated action plans, and measuring collective impact. Since launching in 2023, this interactive tool has reached more than 25,000 people and generated over 65,000 visits, becoming a trusted resource for local governments, nonprofits, and residents nationwide. Early support from Einhorn Collaborative made it possible to build and launch the guide, and their continued partnership — alongside new collaborators like Health Net — is helping us bring this work to even more communities.

## Learn More

Explore our new Action Guide case studies, featuring in-depth stories from cohort communities — covering their motivations, approaches, impact, lessons learned, and what's next. Visit the Action Guide's "**Communities in Action**" page to dive into these real-world examples of fostering connection.

Building on the progress made with our legacy Action Guide cohort in 2024 — where communities deepened resident engagement, strengthened cross-sector coalitions, identified priority neighborhoods through data, and embedded social connection into local systems — we are now expanding this work into a new phase. In partnership with Healthy Places by Design, we will re-engage the legacy cohort as they implement their 2024 action plans and measure collective impact, while also launching new Action Guide cohorts in California and New York. These upcoming efforts position us strongly toward a future where every community has the tools, evidence, and support needed to build connection and resilience.
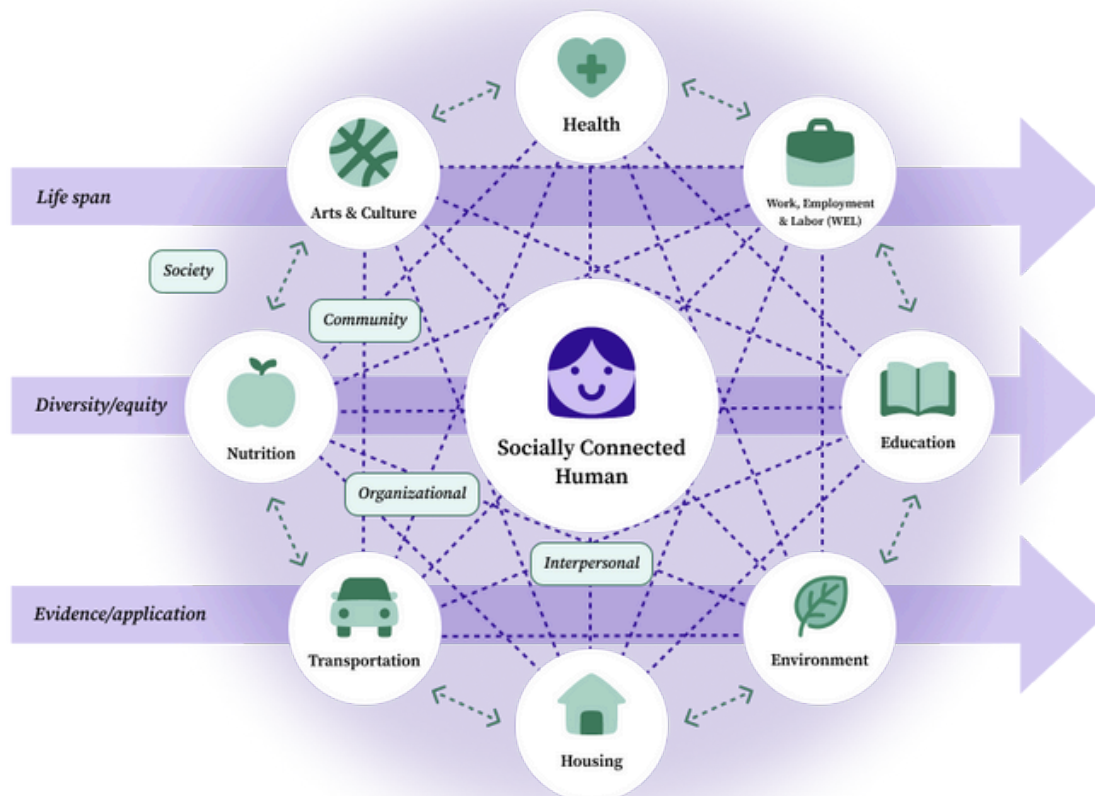
## Hear from Local Leaders

At our 2025 Social Connection Conference, legacy cohort leaders reunited as panelists to share what they learned from using the Action Guide, how they navigated challenges along the way, and how their efforts are beginning to spark deeper, systems-level change. Watch the **full conversation** to hear their insights and see how local action is reshaping community connection.

## Get Involved

Our ability to expand Action Guide cohorts and deepen community support is only possible through generous partners and sponsors. Join us in fueling this momentum so we can bring tools, training, and hands-on assistance to even more communities in the years ahead.

**Reach Out**

# The SOCIAL Framework



This spring, we released our fifth Systems Of Cross-sector Integration and Action across the Lifespan (SOCIAL) Framework sector report on the **Food and Nutrition sector**, highlighting how food systems — from production to consumption — can be reimagined to advance connection. Drawing on expertise from researchers, practitioners, and community leaders, the report outlines ten actionable strategies for weaving social connection into programs, policies, and environments, while confronting the systemic barriers that limit access to both healthy food and social opportunities. To support communities, educators, and practitioners in bringing these ideas to life, we also hosted a **webinar** that unpacked key insights from the report and showcased real-world examples of how shared meals, community gardens, and culturally rooted food traditions can help cultivate connection, resilience, and belonging.

Next year, we look forward to exploring the final sector in our SOCIAL Framework: Arts, Culture, and Leisure. Stay in the know about its release by signing up for updates **here**. We also invite you to share relevant research or community examples with us **here**.



Explore the **Food and Nutrition report** and watch **our webinar** featuring strategy spotlights and a fireside chat with expert researchers and practitioners from our report subcommittee.

# Navigating Generative AI and Youth Social Connection

**IN COLLABORATION WITH**

Foundation for Social Connection

**Pinterest**

**Navigating Generative AI and Youth Social Connection**
Through Intergenerational Conversation

In September, we launched **Navigating Generative AI and Youth Social Connection Through Intergenerational Conversation**, exploring the complex and rapidly evolving relationship between generative AI and young people's social connectedness. Developed in collaboration with intergenerational experts and supported by Pinterest, this resource is designed for parents, educators, and other adults who care for young people to better understand and collectively navigate the impact of AI companions on mental health and social well-being.

Over six months, F4SC conducted an in-depth exploration into this topic — reviewing emerging research, interviewing leading experts, analyzing online conversations, and co-hosting intergenerational workshops with organizations including Joint Family and The Rithm Project. The result is a dynamic, accessible hub of videos, reflections, strategies, and resources to spark productive conversation between generations and collaborative action.

**Committed to driving change at the individual, interpersonal, and societal levels, this resource aims to:**

- Equip adults with a better understanding of why young people turn to AI for companionship.
- Promote open, informed conversations between young people and caregivers about generative AI for companionship.
- Encourage reflection and joint decision-making around AI companion use to address young people's unmet social and emotional needs.
- Challenge stigma, fear, and shame around generative AI to create supportive spaces where young people can sustain and deepen human connections.

We look forward to launching a comment board on the site to continue the conversation.

**Explore the site and add your thoughts here.**

# The Roadmap

In October, we released **The Roadmap: Reimagining Infrastructure to Improve Social Capital**, a resource supported by the Gates Foundation to help local governments understand and act upon the role of social capital in advancing economic mobility. Drawing on nationwide community visits, expert interviews, and research linking "third places" — including libraries, parks, and other gathering spaces — to social and economic opportunity, the Roadmap provides actionable strategies, local examples, and lessons learned to guide municipalities in designing more connected, inclusive, and prosperous communities. By offering practical tools and a clear framework, this resource empowers local leaders, policymakers, and community organizations to embed social connection into infrastructure decisions, build bridging relationships across differences, and create environments where every person has the opportunity to belong, participate, and thrive.
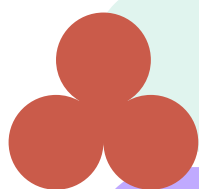
We engaged experts from across diverse fields to inform the framework, indicators, terminology, and a catalog of successful interventions. Local advisors in six communities guided us as we co-planned gatherings, visited third places, and learned the stories of each local context. Residents, government leaders, and other stakeholders explored the proposed materials in detail, provided valuable input, and participated in sessions designed to foster connection

## Explore Community Stories

**Baltimore, MD**

**Buncombe County, NC**

**Eureka Springs, AR**

**Hartford, CT**

**Hennepin County, MN**

**San Antonio, TX**

through storytelling and activate groups to plan a follow-up gathering to explore next steps. Our approach in each community was a reflection of its unique context and the interests of its residents.
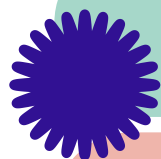
## Key findings from these community visits include:

**Nearly 66% of local leaders** and **75% of community members** strongly agreed that social infrastructure should receive as much or more investment as physical infrastructure.

**Only 28% of local leaders** strongly agree that promoting social capital is an explicit goal in their community's local strategic plans or comprehensive community efforts.

**Only 16% of local leaders** strongly agree that economic mobility is a key objective of their city's planning, zoning, or investment strategies.

**Only 8% of local leaders** strongly agree that there are adequate line items in their budget that promote building social capital (i.e., investment in public spaces).

The Roadmap offers a set of recommendations for how individuals, organizations, and third places interact to intentionally support the empowerment of residents, the growth of networks, and the alignment of resources so that communities are working together to ensure all residents are thriving. This requires the slower, deeper work of relationship building, which requires opportunities to exchange stories, see each other's humanity, and commit to collective well-being.



### Identify People, Places, and Programs
Whether you are a government leader, nonprofit staff member, librarian, or community member, begin by identifying others who are interested in bringing people together to build connection.

### Invest in Opportunities for Intentional Connection
We are all shaped by our identities and experiences. Ongoing interaction that eliminates power dynamics helps build trust and connect people across shared values.



### Analyze Policies, Processes, and Goals
A first step toward creating a strategy and goals for addressing inequities together is to openly discuss how data policies, processes, and spending affect populations differently — with residents who are most impacted by inequitable systems in the lead.

### Embed Dialogue, Organizing, Civic Literacy, and Job Readiness in Third Places
Third places, when they serve as social meeting spaces and civic hubs, provide opportunities to activate and create strategies for change because residents are better equipped to take part in the democratic process and participate in the change that is needed in communities.



### Align on Community Measures
Collecting primary data in neighborhoods to determine how residents strengthen connection and experience feelings of trust, belonging, and voice in local government can lead to building networks and social capital.

### Promote Social Connection as a Movement
Building social infrastructure that fosters everyday interaction shifts connection from being a "nice-to-have" for a select few to a "must-have" for all, cultivating a culture in which every person's future and well-being matter.



**View and Download the Full Report**

## Our Research and Practice Partners

In 2025, F4SC worked with a wide variety of partners to translate research on social isolation, loneliness, and connection into practice through programs, products, and policies. In collaboration with our SLC, our Research and Practice team supported nonprofit organizations, companies, and federal agencies with understanding their impact and applying these insights to future efforts.

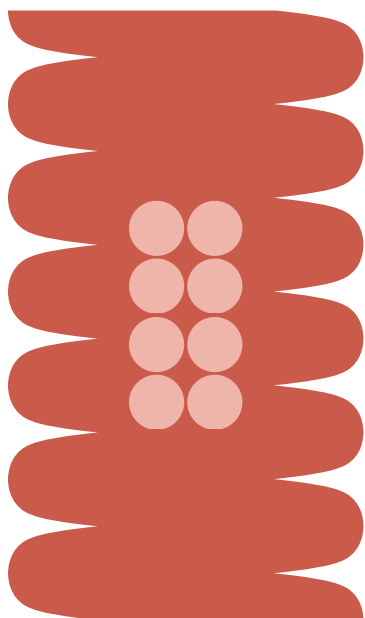### Archewell Foundation — The Parents' Network

In partnership with The Archewell Foundation, we developed an evaluation framework for The Parents' Network (TPN), a community for parents whose children and families have been impacted by online harm. Through surveys and interviews among parents and community leads, we sought to understand TPN's impact on mental health, purpose, and connectedness. Our findings from the past year revealed that more parents are participating in advocacy efforts, building skills to support their grief, and feeling less lonely or isolated as a result of their engagement in the network.

### Archewell Foundation — The Welcome Project

The Welcome Project is an initiative led by The Archewell Foundation that supports recently resettled Afghan women in building a sense of community in their new home. In our second year of working with Archewell to evaluate the impact of the project, we identified key outcomes related to a sense of community, happiness, mental health, and understanding community needs. These included developing meaningful friendships, experiencing joy, and strengthening language skills.



The Refugee Women's Network, partners in The Welcome Project, graciously shared insights about their work with our Social Connection Conference attendees and facilitated community site visits in Atlanta
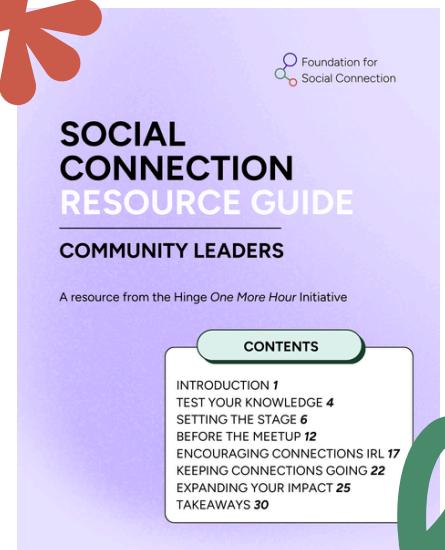
### Department of Veteran Affairs

*Introduction to Social Connection as a Social Determinant of Health for Medical Students* was a pilot course developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in partnership with the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to educate future healthcare providers on the vital role of social connection in individual and population health. The course provided insight into the application of social prescribing and equipped medical students with skills to support socially isolated individuals, particularly veterans. F4SC supported the course by co-developing the evaluation tools and processes to assess the program's impact. Through data collection and analysis, F4SC found increases in students' understanding of social prescribing, their comfort with putting social prescribing into practice, and the likelihood of incorporating social prescribing into their future professional practice.

## Hinge

In 2024, we worked with Hinge on its One More Hour (1MH) initiative to provide $1 million in grants to organizations advancing in-person social connection among young people in Atlanta, New York City, and Los Angeles. This past year, we launched the **Social Connection Resource Guide for Community Leaders.** Drawing from interviews with subject matter experts, input from club leaders, and focus group discussions, the guide provided 1MH grantees with practical strategies and insights to increase membership, engagement, and the quality of connections created. Through qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, we found that 1MH clubs saw increases in the number of members spending six hours per month in club activities, the number of members who feel connected to others in their club, and in the number of members who feel like they receive more emotional support.

**SOCIAL CONNECTION RESOURCE GUIDE**

**COMMUNITY LEADERS**

A resource from the Hinge *One More Hour* Initiative

Foundation for Social Connection

## NBA Total Health presented by Evernorth Health Services

Launched in February 2025, NBA Total Health is a league-wide platform designed to make health more accessible, inclusive, and actionable for everyone. Through a holistic approach that prioritizes the interconnectedness of mental, physical, and community wellbeing, the platform empowers fans to take control of their wellness journey with tools, resources, and guidance from trusted experts and inspiring NBA voices, encouraging small, everyday steps toward better health. F4SC was selected as a community partner for the platform, empowering fans with evidence-based tools — such as the Action Guide for Building Socially Connected Communities — and supporting the platform's programming designed to help foster social connection.

## National Endowment for the Arts

F4SC was selected as one of 18 recipients of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)'s 2025 Research Grants in the Arts awards. Guided by the expertise of the Foundation's Scientific Leadership Council (SLC) Chair and Vice-Chair, Drs. Julianne Holt-Lunstad and Carla Perissinotto, the Foundation and its partner, Art Pharmacy, are evaluating the impact of arts-based social prescribing on social isolation and loneliness among older adults enrolled in Medicare health plans. Through exploring how social prescribing can foster meaningful social connections, improve mental health outcomes, enhance overall well-being in older adults, and impact healthcare utilization patterns, the study will contribute to our understanding of the role that the arts can play in healthcare delivery across the nation. **If your organization is interested in financially supporting this research, please reach out to us here.**

## U.S. Administration for Community Living

Commit to Connect (CTC), an initiative of the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) coordinated by USAging, supports older adults, people with disabilities, and family caregivers experiencing social isolation or loneliness. In 2025, we reconvened CTC's Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) — composed of experts from F4SC's SLC — to build on its earlier work developing taxonomies, evaluation criteria, and evidence categories for interventions. This year, the SAG focused on recommending how evidence could be translated into practical tools that can be used in the field. In 2026, we look forward to collaborating with ACL and USAging to strengthen the Aging and Disability Networks' services and programs focused on strengthening social connections.

# Network
# & Partnerships

Building strong networks and partnerships is essential to accelerating progress in this work. In 2025, F4SC brought together diverse stakeholders, fostered collaboration, and created opportunities for shared learning that strengthened the field and generated sustainable impact. In 2026, we will continue to leverage these relationships to convene experts, share insights, and provide resources that deepen connections, support coordinated action, and drive lasting progress nationwide.

## Convenings

### 2025 Social Connection Conference

In October, over 300 changemakers convened in Atlanta for our **2025 Social Connection Conference,** cohosted with Healthy Places by Design. Under the theme *Seeds of Connection*, we explored how intentional relationship-building across sectors of society can transform communities and systems at every level. Across 24 sessions, six community site visits, and three days of dynamic interaction, participants planted ideas, nurtured collaborations, and connected across industries — from business and philanthropy to healthcare, government, and community organizations. The conference lifted up inclusive, evidence-based approaches, innovative tools, and human-centered design strategies that foster trust, belonging, and resiliency — creating momentum that will continue to inspire action and shape practice across the social connection ecosystem. We look forward to reconvening in 2027.

Foundation for Social Connection · HEALTHY PLACES BY DESIGN

IMPACT REPORT

**SOCIAL CONNECTION CONFERENCE**
SEEDS OF CONNECTION
OCT 28-30 | ATLANTA, GA

Explore **Highlights, Recordings,** and **Photos!**

### Building Consensus: Aligning on Person-Centered Social Connection Measures

In 2025, F4SC was awarded funding through the Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Award Program, an initiative of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute® (PCORI®). The award will support a national convening — *Building Consensus: Aligning on Person-Centered Social Connection Measures* — led by Drs. Thomas Cudjoe and Ashwin Kotwal, members of F4SC's Scientific Leadership Council (SLC). By bringing together researchers, community leaders, clinicians, and people with lived experience, the gathering will address longstanding challenges in measuring social isolation, loneliness, and broader indicators of social connection for patient-centered comparative clinical effectiveness research (CER). Through establishing patient-centered priorities for social isolation, loneliness, and connection measurement, optimizing measurement tools for diverse groups, highlighting innovative interventions, and creating mentorship opportunities for early-stage investigators, the convening will bridge critical gaps in the field.
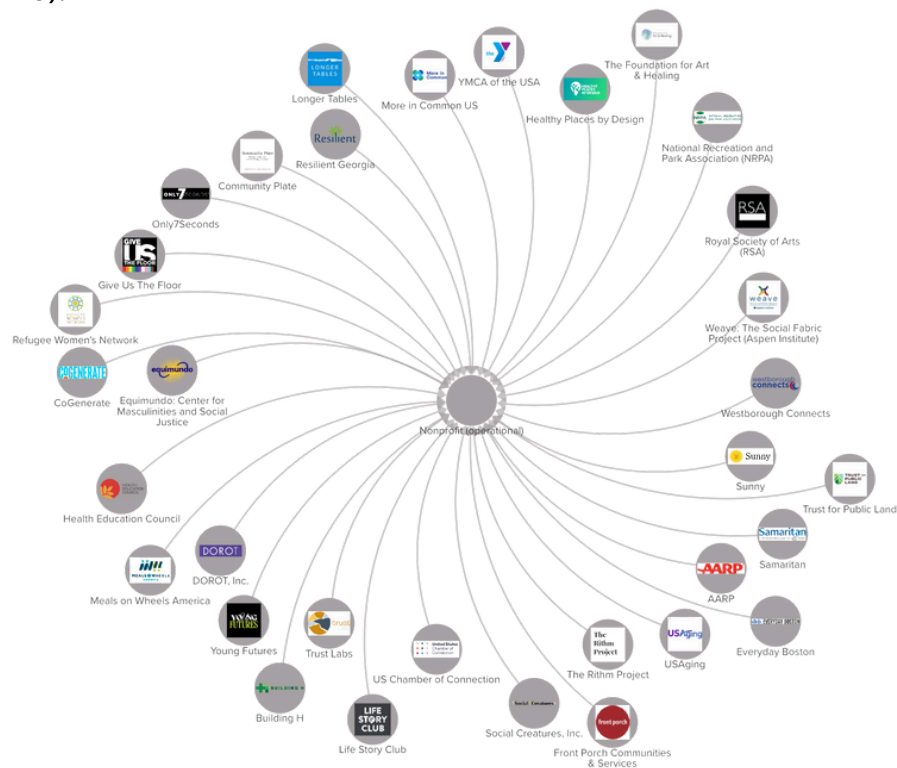
We look forward to hosting the convening in March 2026 in Washington, DC. **If your organization is interested in supporting the convening, we invite you to explore sponsorship opportunities here and reach out to us here.**

# US SILC Ecosystem Map

Our strategic planning process revealed a need to better understand and coordinate efforts across the U.S. social isolation, loneliness, and connection (SILC) ecosystem to advance social connection across diverse sectors and disciplines. This was validated by the WHO Commission on Social Connection's landmark report, _From loneliness to social connection: Charting a path to healthier societies_, released in June 2025. The report presented findings from a stakeholder network mapping exercise conducted by the Commission to better understand the existence and nature of relationships between entities around the world addressing SILC. Within the report, they conclude, "The results of the [network mapping] survey suggest that, given the low density and reciprocity in existing networks, there is both a need and untapped potential to build stronger local, national and global networks on social connection" (pg 126).

In support of such networks, F4SC has created the **US SILC Ecosystem Map**, a resource that categorizes and visualizes the landscape of entities advancing social connection across the US. Throughout 2025, we undertook a comprehensive effort to map and understand the US SILC ecosystem. This involved inviting entities across the ecosystem to complete a survey about their work and their perspectives on the ecosystem's strengths, challenges, and needs. As the political, economic, and technological landscapes of our country evolve, so, too, should we expect to see changes in what the ecosystem needs to build more connected communities. In 2026, an inaugural state of the ecosystem report will accompany the ecosystem map and capture key takeaways from more than 55 entities' reflections and ideas.



Preview of the US SILC Ecosystem Map

Through the map and report, we aim to increase visibility for entities addressing SILC in the US, inform resource priorities, and foster collaboration that breaks down silos. These resources will be accompanied by a webinar featuring diverse perspectives on how the US SILC ecosystem can broaden and deepen its impact.

**Sign up here to be notified of the map and report's release in early 2026!**

# Working Groups



## Corporate Working Group

In addition to a public health issue, social disconnection is a bottom-line business issue that impacts productivity, innovation, and employee well-being. Proactively addressing it can reduce turnover, lower healthcare costs, and improve brand reputation.

Recognizing the critical role that the private sector has to play in fostering social connection both at work and beyond, F4SC launched a **Corporate Working Group on Social Connection** in 2025. Founding members include Beiersdorf/NIVEA, The Cigna Group, Match Group, the National Football League (NFL), Signet Jewelers, Spotify, and Workday. The group gives companies the tools and network to learn from top researchers, share best practices with industry peers, and drive cultural change.

**If you are a business interested in joining, please contact us here.**

## Older Adult Working Group

The **Older Adult Working Group** (OAWG) is made up of organizations addressing SILC among older adults, serving as a platform for identifying opportunities for collaboration, sharing best practices, and learning about new developments. In 2025, the OAWG worked with Dr. Matthew Lee Smith, a member of F4SC's SLC, to pilot two retrospective measurement tools used to understand the impact of interventions intended to advance social connection and/or address social isolation/loneliness. The collaboration served as an opportunity to bring together research and practice by grounding the measurement tools in both science and applicability. The final versions of these tools will be published in 2026, supporting organizations' ability to demonstrate and expand their impact.

## Young Adult, Intergenerational, and More!

In addition to the Older Adult Working Group, F4SC continues to support other areas of focus, including young adults, intergenerational connection, and BIPOC communities. As momentum in the SILC ecosystem grows, we are keen to support additional populations through convening individuals and organizations.

**To get involved with an existing working group or to propose a new focus area, please contact us here.**

# Storytelling
# & Communications

Grounded in evidence-based messaging and lived experience, our storytelling and communications work is dedicated to reshaping how social connection is understood and prioritized across society. In 2025, we expanded our influence by bringing research and practical insights to new audiences and cultivating a growing network of champions advancing social connection — laying the foundation for deeper impact in the years ahead.

## Taking the Message Nationwide

This year, our team hit the road more than ever before, connecting with partners across the country to share practical strategies for advancing social connection. In these presentations, we confronted some of society's most urgent challenges — promoting systemic change to expand opportunity and well-being for those at the margins, while helping communities bridge divides, reduce polarization, and foster shared understanding. Along the way, we highlighted innovative ways to strengthen connection, from reimagining public spaces that bring people together to guiding businesses in fostering relationships within their workplaces and the communities they serve. Through national conferences, corporate briefings, media roundtables, and global summits, we delivered actionable insights, showcased real-world solutions, and sparked conversations that are shaping how communities and organizations put social connection into practice.

## Communicating the Research

At the beginning of the year, we strengthened our weekly newsletter, ***The Weekly Connect***, turning it into a key platform for advancing our storytelling and communications goals. Each issue translates evidence and research into practical insights that help readers understand and prioritize social connection in their own work. We created spaces for the community to contribute — submitting research, sharing upcoming social connection events, and highlighting real-world strategies through our "Translating Research into Practice" feature — amplifying diverse voices and lived experience. By curating actionable guidance alongside compelling stories from communities nationwide, *The Weekly Connect* empowers multidisciplinary understanding of social connection and spurs action across sectors and backgrounds.

# Our Ambassador Program

In July 2025, we launched the **F4SC Ambassador Program** to build a national network of passionate leaders who amplify the importance of social connection and drive meaningful change in their communities. Today, 70 Ambassadors across 27 states are using their voices to elevate our mission — serving as thought leaders, community mobilizers, and community connectors who share practical strategies, represent F4SC, and advance social connection across sectors.

Rooted in the power of storytelling, the program equips Ambassadors to integrate evidence into their work, highlight F4SC's tools and resources, and inspire action. By amplifying real-world examples and fostering cross-sector collaboration, Ambassadors help communities bridge divides, address social disconnection, and elevate understanding of how social connection drives individual and collective well-being.

In 2026, we look forward to strengthening and expanding the program to focus on strategic priority areas, deepen cross-sector engagement, and provide even more opportunities for Ambassadors to lead initiatives that create lasting impact.
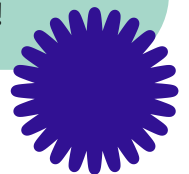
# 70 | 27

ambassadors | states



Many Ambassadors gathered in-person for the first time at our Social Connection Conference to explore how their work intersects and celebrate the collective impact they are advancing together.

## Our Ambassadors' Focus Areas

- **Arts & Culture**
- **Business & Workplace**
- **Community Building & Civic Engagement**
- **Disability**
- **Education & Schools**
- **Healthcare**
- **Immigrants & Refugees**
- **Interfaith & Spirituality**
- **LGBTQ+ Communities**
- **Mental Health**
- **Military & Veterans**
- **Older Adults & Aging**
- **Rural Communities**
- **Technology & Digital Connection**
- **Youth & Adolescents**

Looking ahead to upcoming projects, we welcome new Ambassador applications — especially from those **working with youth** or **experienced in thought leadership** and **social media campaigns.**

**Sign up to hear when 2026 applications open!**

**Sign Up**

# Take
# Action

We are building a movement to address our crisis of disconnection, and we feel the urgency to address this crisis through a comprehensive, cross-sectoral approach. We encourage you to join us in this critical time. Thank you for being an integral part of our community.

**Partner with Us on a Project**

**Explore the Action Guide**

**Download the Roadmap**

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**Subscribe to Our Newsletter**

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## Thank you to our close partners and supporters

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