

## 2022 PINNACLE PRIZE WINNER



# Rachel Jefferson

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
*Groundwork NRG*



Rachel Jefferson is the Executive Director of Groundwork Northeast Revitalization Group (Groundwork NRG), formerly known as the

Historic Northeast-Midtown Association. As Executive Director, she leads the organization in its efforts to champion economic, environmental, land, housing, and food sovereignty and cultural identity and belonging to the community in Northeast Kansas City, Kansas. Groundwork NRG connects local community members with programs, resources, projects, and organizations to continue to develop the historically rich area.

Born and raised in Kansas City, Missouri, Rachel attended Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Upon her return to Kansas City, she relocated to the Kansas side of the state line and became a dedicated resident of the northeast area of KCK. She witnesses the impact redlining, predatory businesses, and need for community intervention have on local socio-economics every day.

Since 2020, Rachel and Groundwork NRG have sponsored and hosted 53 events, programs, projects, and trainings in their community, including several neighborhood canvassing initiatives. In an effort to bring the city's inequitable Tax Sale process to an end, the group raised more than \$80,000 to help 34 local families fight unfair evictions and stay in their homes.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization coordinated the Dial-a-Neighbor Census Equity Campaign, providing wellness checks and public health emergency information to 8,869 residents in difficult-to-count census tracts which resulted in increased census completions and follow up visits from community health workers for those in need of assistance.

The Groundwork NRG Green Team engages high school-age youth from primarily BIPOC communities in environmental education, job training, stewardship, employment, and leadership opportunities. The Green Team initiative teaches youth environmental stewardship and how to transform neglected land into community assets through community-based participatory research and design-think methodology. Recent projects have included a habitat enrichment project in the Jersey Creek area and working with three neighborhoods to co-design green infrastructure interventions and revitalize three neighborhood vacant lots.

