



Transition to Nonprofit Formation details

Backdrop: The Center for Nonprofit Excellence has been a project under the umbrella of the Community Foundation of North Central Florida since 2015. During the last decade, the Foundation staff have built CNE into a vital local resource for nonprofit education, support, and advocacy. Combined with the tools that the Community Foundation has developed, like the Philanthropy Hub, the annual State of the Sector report and The Amazing Give, CNE members and community as a whole have benefitted from access to learning, resources, and collaborative opportunities.

New Opportunities: In the past year, many new opportunities have arisen for the CNE. These include greater participation in collective impact work, implementing a Coordinated Community Response model for big issues, recruiting new initiatives, using member visioning for the annual training calendar, connecting with local experts for consultation and learning, Leadership Certificate training, and many more. These opportunities afford CNE the chance to grow, and the Community Foundation acknowledged that in order to realize this potential, CNE needed to move out from under their umbrella and become our own standalone nonprofit.

Transition: Starting in May, we began the transition to forming our 501c3. On July 17th, we held our inaugural Board Meeting and elected our new Board of Directors. Seven amazing local partners have signed on to ready the CNE to meet the current and future challenges of creating ongoing education, support and advocacy for the community (see the picture below for the details). We anticipate that we will finalize our standalone status by the end of the year, but will start operations as a legal entity by September 1, 2025.

Changes: Several changes will be coming as the transition moves forward. The first is that our office location will be moving to the Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce beginning August 1. This will position us to maximize our access to the business expertise members can leverage, and find greater resources in the professional community. Second, we will be increasing the programming we offer using more local experts. In November, we will be holding visioning for the coming year's education and support, and we will offer both group and individual sessions to identify the topics. Finally, we will be taking on more community wide initiatives for collective impact. As these projects develop, we hope to increase membership in CNE with the agencies doing the targeted work and grow engagement of existing members with staff at all levels.

Collaboration: With the advent of the new business, we will be working to enhance our local network of collaboration. We will not be doing traditional fundraising that will compete with our members, however. Our vision is instead to grow the fee for service programming that we offer and steadily grow memberships and participation with businesses in the region. Marketing will focus on nonprofits needing education, support, and advocacy, for-profits wanting education on nonprofit alliances and corporate sponsor opportunities, and business services to startups including fiscal sponsorships, business planning, and program mentorship.

Next Steps: Over the next 3 months, we want to meet with each of our members individually to answer any questions, set up strategy and advocacy sessions, and ensure that the return on investment for membership is achieved. Our goal is to create and provide actionable and relevant programs for staff at all levels of agencies, to agencies of all sizes, working on missions across the spectrum of issues, and with programs in all stages of development.



Inaugural Board members: John Barli (Chair), Stephen Walker II, Dr. Karen Ehlers (Secretary), Debbie Frederick (Treasurer) Laura Gruber, Carrie Lee and Victoria Stevenson (zoom)