



Communications Report – December 2021

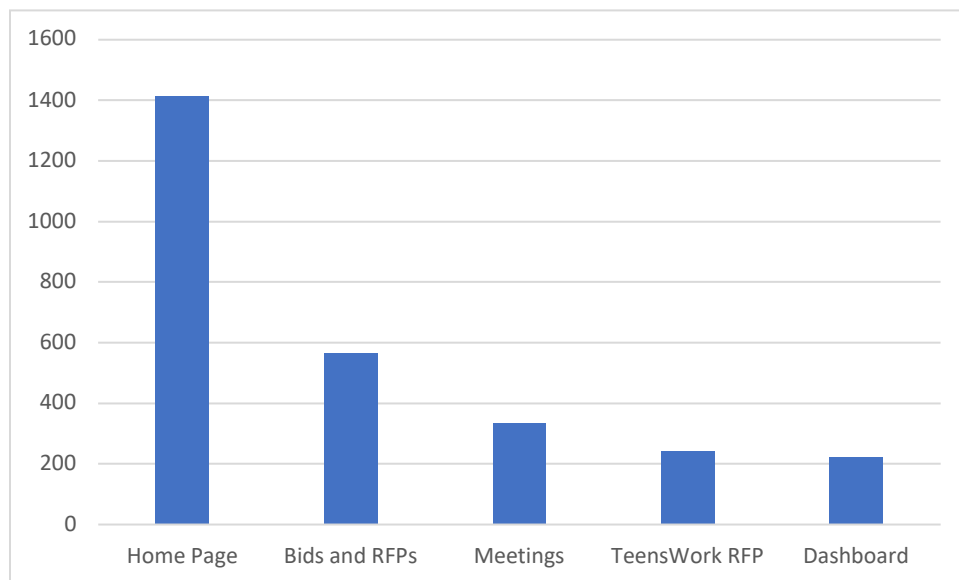
December 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021

Website Dashboard






Website Traffic – Key Points

- Page Views 6,208
- Sessions 2,095
- New Users 1,147

Most Viewed Pages



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 Constant Contact	1,121
	702
	159
	139
	110

CTAC in the News

[An agenda for progress in 2022 for Gainesville and Alachua County, January 1, 2022
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[Employers can get help hiring teenagers for summer work through Children's Trust
December 27, 2021, Gainesville Sun](#)

[TeensWork RFP released by Children's Trust, December 20, 2021, Alachua Chronicle](#)

[Children's Trust of Alachua County votes to give withheld funding to youth organizations,
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[Some youth program providers aren't happy with Children's Trust funding policies, December
11, 2021, Gainesville Sun](#)

OPINION *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

An agenda for progress in 2022 for Gainesville and Alachua County

The Gainesville Sun Editorial Board

Published 6:00 a.m. ET Jan. 1, 2022

The start of 2022 feels like we're stuck on repeat as COVID-19 continues to be a challenge. But federal relief funding offers the opportunity to better address problems caused by the pandemic as well as other longstanding issues in Gainesville and Alachua County.

The money should be spent on major local needs such as affordable housing and reducing racial and socioeconomic disparities in schools. Elected officials must also implement policies that create a more sustainable community.

The Sun has an annual tradition of presenting a local "agenda for progress" around the start of each new year, providing recommendations for the coming year. Here are some changes that we would like to see happen in 2021:

Housing and development: Officials should keep pursuing policies and programs, such as inclusionary zoning and a community land trust, that increase the availability of affordable housing and spread multi-family housing more equitably throughout Gainesville. Disparities in housing must be better addressed, such as through energy efficiency upgrades that reduce utility costs for lower-income residents. Development plans for the Power District and downtown Gainesville need to be finalized and Community Reinvestment Area funding should start being spent on major east-side projects.

Transportation: The city needs to follow through on safety improvements that better protect pedestrians and cyclists in the University of Florida campus area as well as throughout the city, including east Gainesville. Regional Transit System service should be improved for residents who need it most, such as through the construction of an east-side mobility hub and expansion of the First Mile/Last Mile pilot program.

Criminal justice: Initiatives to prevent gun violence should continue to be a priority, particularly the Gainesville Police Department's intervention programs. Reforms need to be made at the Alachua County Jail in the wake of an inmate giving birth there and the death of the child.

Schools and youth issues: Alachua County Public Schools should use federal relief funding to address learning losses caused by the pandemic as well as a persistent racial gap in student test scores. An equity plan to address that gap shouldn't be abandoned, but has to be improved upon. Better coordination is needed between after-school, pre-K and summer programs, eliminating duplication and making the best use of resources such as Children's Trust funding.

Higher education: The University of Florida needs to go beyond its narrow changes in policies on professors testifying in court cases and its narrow investigation into the destruction of COVID-19 data, broadly addressing problems with academic freedom. The UF administration must follow through on the full slate of racial justice initiatives announced in the summer of 2020.

Health and environment: Operating funds must be secured for a central receiving facility that provides a place to bring people experiencing a mental health crisis. Vaccinations should continue to be promoted among children and booster shots among those eligible. Solar farms and other renewable energy projects should be pursued in all parts of the county. Parks projects such as the Sweetwater Branch Greenway and Boulware Springs renovations should be approved.

Government reforms: Changes should be made to reduce conflict in Gainesville city government such as reducing the number of charter officers. Duplicate city and county services should be consolidated.

These are just a few recommendations for improving our community in 2022. Happy New Year, readers.

EDUCATION

Employers can get help hiring teenagers for summer work through Children's Trust

[Gershon Harrell](#) The Gainesville Sun

Published 9:53 p.m. ET Dec. 26, 2021

Children's Trust of Alachua County — a local tax initiative to fund youth programs — has recently opened their RFP application for their TeensWork Alachua Summer Youth Program.

The pilot program will help employ 150-200 students aged 14-18 as interns during summer 2022. Employers can get support paying the teenagers through funds provided through Children's Trust.

The local tax initiative has set aside a total of \$150,000 to give to local youth organizations. The funds can help contractors with expenses such as marketing, outreach, work recruitment, work training and job coaching. The Trust estimates the cost to perform those services should range from \$700-\$1,000 per teenager.

According to the Trust's application, workers should be paid at least \$10 an hour, the state's minimum wage. A hire wage can be proposed, but the contractor must provide a reason for why the wage is necessary. Teenagers should work up to 25 hours paid hours for six to eight weeks in June and July.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics stated that in July of 2021 the unemployment rate for young people was 10%. That's down from the rate in July of 2020 which was 18.5%.

The Bureau further found that there is an uptick in searching for jobs in youth ages 16 to 24-years-old around April and July. It further states that during those months high school and college aged students are looking for summer jobs.

The Trust also found that violent crime in the state of Florida doubled. And that youth arrest in Alachua County outrank the state, which have affected 79% of black youth.

To qualify contractors the organization must be within Alachua County, must have

qualifications to do business in the state, be a 501c3 non-profit approved by the Community of North Central Florida's Philanthropy Hub. Charter schools are not eligible.

Applications will be reviewed from January 17-21. Contracts are set to begin March 1.

TeensWork RFP released by Children's Trust

December 20, 2021



Press release from Children's Trust of Alachua County

CTAC is seeking a Contractor or Contractors to manage the TeensWork Alachua (TWA) Summer Youth Employment Program. TWA is a pilot project of CTAC that aims to employ between 150-200 youth from ages 14-18 years old as summer interns during the summer of 2022. Summer interns will be employees of a temporary staffing agency and their salaries will be paid through funds provided directly by CTAC. The Contractor will be responsible for marketing, outreach, worksite recruitment, summer intern recruitment, work readiness training, and job coaching.

RFP documents can be found here:

<https://www.childrenstrustofalachuacounty.us/communications/page/teensworks-alachua-rfp-released-childrens-trust>

EDUCATION

Children's Trust of Alachua County votes to give withheld funding to youth organizations

[Gershon Harrell](#) The Gainesville Sun

Published 11:05 a.m. ET Dec. 14, 2021

One thing was made clear at the Children's Trust of Alachua County's Monday night board meeting: there is a lack of trust between the leaders of the taxpayer initiative and the community they are supposed to serve.

The board met Monday night to discuss the Children's Trust data collection policy that requires the collection of personal identifiable information about students and their parents. The board also discussed whether to fund the programs that refused to give up that information.

In the end the board members voted 8-0 to approve the motion to remove the current data policy requirements that prohibited the youth providers from obtaining their funding.

The meeting was spurred after Executive Director of Aces in Motion Addison Staples posted on his Facebook account that funding was withheld for his after-school program.

In a news release sent to The Sun on Friday, Aces in Motion explained that it was informed on Dec. 7 that its current contract for after-school programming was in default and that its funding was being withheld.

Staples told The Sun that over \$20,000 was withheld from their youth organization after Staples decided not to share personal information about students or their parents in a Google document.

Aces In Motion (AIM) is a youth organization that promotes health, character development and academic achievement through its tennis program. The after-school program is headquartered at Duval Early Learning Center.

At the board meeting Staples expressed that he reached out to the Children's Trust

about its policy in an email Nov. 3. He also told The Sun that he verbally brought his concern about sharing personal information to Children's Trust in June.

According to the RFP application for after-school programming the data that youth providers were expected to collect included the first and last names of students, scholarship criteria, current grade, race, names of parents and their address.

Kids Count and Girls Place were other youth organizations that chose not to give Children's Trust personal identifiable information.

Nikki Lee, a concerned parent, came to the Children's Trust board meeting to support AIM. Her 17-year-old daughter has been attending the AIM's after-school program for six years.

"If you just ask me what my gender is, my ZIP code or something like that, I will give it to you freely. But a lot of times when we do give more information, they reach out to us. I don't want nobody come into my house. I don't want anyone reaching out to me when it has nothing to do with me, this is for kids funding." Lee said.

Colin Murphy, executive director of the Children's Trust, said he feels terrible that there is a strong lack of trust in the community and their contract providers because the intent of the organization is to advocate for children.

"Unfortunately sometimes as adults we mess things up, but I think we're all on the same team when it comes to children," Murphy said.

The Children's Trust of Alachua County was approved by voters in 2018. Voters agreed to tax themselves an extra half-mill on property taxes to generate roughly \$7 million a year to support children's programs.

Children's Trust to change data collecting policy, give withheld funds back to youth organizations

By [Camille Syed](#)

Published: Dec. 13, 2021 at 11:37 PM EST

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (WCJB) - The Children's Trust of Alachua County (CTAC) agreed to give funding to organizations that were previously in default at Monday nights board meeting. Aces in Motion (AIM), Girl's Place, and Kids Count refused to give personal identifiable information of students and legal guardians to the CTAC.

Nikki Lee's daughter, Sonia James, has been in AIM for six years.

Lee said she feels like the goal of the CTAC is to benefit kids, and collecting identifiable information like names, addresses, of marginalized groups is unnecessary in reaching that goal.

"I was furious," Lee said.

AIM is being withheld more than \$20,000 for not giving staff the information, as they serve Black and marginalized communities.

"As a board member I don't feel comfortable asking for personal identifiable information," CTAC Board Member Tina Certain said.

According to AIM, they first verbally raised concerns during the summer.

Executive Director Addison Staples said they expressed concern through email on Nov. 3 and heard back from staff on Nov. 5.

"You're asking me did I graduate or am I married or anything like that," Lee said. "What do that have to do with anything for our kids."

Several people spoke passionately during the meeting.

"If you just asked me what my gender is, my zip code or something like that, I would give it to you freely," Lee said. "A lot of times when we do give more information they reach out to us. I don't want nobody coming to my house."

Lee was also worried that the information would be used inappropriately.

"You want to know something? Come talk to the kids," Lee said. "Come figure out what's really going on with the kids instead of you thinking that somebody is trying to use funding for something that has nothing to do with anything. I think it's more than just data."

Board Member Ken Cornell motioned to eliminate the private information requirement for now, give these organizations the funds being withheld and work with several agencies to reevaluate their policy. The motion was approved unanimously

"We've heard that in this case, less is more and the less we collect, the more trust we build," CTAC Executive Director Colin Murphy said.

In their new policy making process, Murphy said they will go agency by agency and hear what data they feel comfortable sharing.

"It was a big mistake, so that's on me," Murphy said. "I apologize and we're going to do better."

Staff will have an outline on how to move forward with the policy for the board at their next meeting on Jan. 10.

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EDUCATION

Some youth program providers aren't happy with Children's Trust funding policies

[Gershon Harrell](#) The Gainesville Sun

Published 10:32 p.m. ET Dec. 11, 2021

Addison Staples, executive director of Aces in Motion, is disappointed with the Children's Trust of Alachua County after he received notification that the contract for his after-school programming is in default and that funding is being withheld for not sharing personal information about students.

Children's Trust is an agency established to manage money coming in from a local property tax initiative for educational programs for youth, especially before- and after-school activities.

Staples posted on Facebook on Wednesday a call to action urging the community to reach out to Children Trust asking "if the practice is ethical" and "if it is being conducted in a way that aligns with the best practice."

"The reason this issue is critically important is because there is a history of institutions mishandling individual data that negatively affects the communities it claims to be helping, especially the Black community and communities that are labeled 'low income'," the Facebook post states.

The Gainesville Sun reached out to Staples for an interview, but he declined to comment.

AIM is an after school youth program that uses the sport of tennis to help the development of students in terms of health, academics and social emotional development. The organization was one of six youth programs approved for funding by Children's Trust in mid August. Their contract began in October.

According to documents from the Children's Trust website, AIM was awarded \$188,443.

Executive Director Colin Murphy said in an email statement that "everyone should be concerned about the misuse of data and we share those concerns." He stated that Children's Trust collects the data to help measure the program's performance and keep themselves accountable.

Murphy also assured that the data provided is kept within the organization and has only been used to evaluate programs and "quality improvement."

In an additional email sent to The Sun, Murphy stated that the data collection provision was also included in the application for summer programming and that AIM collected the data as required.

"AIM can receive full payment as soon as they fulfill their contractual agreement," Murphy said in an email.

Within the Children's Trust contractor application there is a data section where youth providers must enter scholarship criteria, the children's name, address, race, parent information, school grade level, race and the students Alachua County student ID number.

The application also asks that the youth providers keep a personnel file of all the staff and volunteers who are involved.

Cultural Arts Coalition also not pleased with the Trust policies

Nkwanda Jah is the executive director of the Cultural Arts Coalition. The CAC is a non-profit and has been around for about 42 years serving children that live on the east side of Gainesville.

When Children's Trust asked for proposals for afterschool programming, she was one of the providers seeking funding for her after-school science program, but found she didn't meet the qualifications.

"We have this school term eight clubs in the East Gainesville community and our clubs meet weekly or bi-weekly. And I was told we do not qualify because we do not serve the same children every day," Jah said.

The CAC program travels to different locations around East Gainesville to engage children who sign up for their activities. Jah said they have partnerships with other local organizations such as Kids Count, the Cone Park Branch Library and the Wilhelmina Johnson Center.

"So for instance, the library partnership has the same kids every day. They have different things for the kids to do each day. We go in there on one of those days and we do science activities with them," Jah said.

On Aug. 21, Jah submitted a question to the Children's Trust organization stating that her program serves numerous community centers and resource centers for children in grades kindergarten through sixth grades, and that their organization does not serve the same children every day. She requested that Children's Trust offer some insight on why her after school program wouldn't be funded.

Children's Trust responded stating her program would be considered an enrichment program and that she does not meet the requirements to bid for after-school funding. However, they did inform her that qualified program providers are encouraged to partner with enrichment providers and they could add the cost to their budget.

Jah applied for Children's Trust funding during the summer for her Environmental Ambassadors program where she qualified and was approved. The program ran for five weeks from July to August at the Wilhelmina Johnson Center.

If she had been qualified to apply for funding it would have helped with staff, materials and additional science equipment for their programs.

"They (Children's Trust) don't have the skills to recognize the programs that they should be supporting. If they see something that should be corrected they should be working with those groups to correct that so they can become eligible for the funding," Jah said.

Jah said even though she doesn't have the funding she will continue to provide her after school programming to children.

The Children's Trust of Alachua County was approved by voters in 2018. Voters agreed to tax themselves an extra half-mill on property taxes to generate roughly \$7 million a year to support children's programs.