

INIE Candidate Questionnaire - Summer 2020

The Institute for Nonprofit Innovation and Excellence (INIE) is a non-profit management support organization. The mission of INIE is to strengthen the capacity and impact of the nonprofit sector through education, collaboration and advocacy. We are comprised of over 180 members with a reach of over 2,400 registered nonprofit organizations.

Collaboration with all sectors is vital to having a vibrant community and a thriving nonprofit ecosystem that is prepared to serve the needs of all residents in the Tallahassee and surrounding area.

Please complete and submit this questionnaire to provide YOUR VOICE regarding the nonprofit sector. We ask that this questionnaire be SUBMITTED by Friday, July 31st. This questionnaire was originally sent in February and other candidates have responded. We are offering another opportunity for your feedback. You can view the received candidate responses at <https://www.theinstitutefornonprofits.org/2020-candidate-voice>

We commend you for your desire to serve our community and look forward to hearing YOUR VOICE. Thank you.

Email address *

ctcumings@embarqmail.com

Candidate Name *

Carolyn D. Cummings

Name of desired commission seat and/or position. *

Leon County Commission At Large, Seat 1

1. Please describe how you have been personally involved in, supported, or been affected by the nonprofit sector. *

Nonprofit entities provide valuable services to the Leon County community in so many areas, including but not limited to healthcare, child care, legal representation and housing. I have been intricately involved with nonprofit entities throughout my legal career, where I have provided free legal services and thousands of my own personal funds to support their missions. My first legal job was as a staff attorney for Legal Services of North Florida (hereinafter LSNF). LSNF is a nonprofit entity that provides free and discounted legal services to indigent and senior citizens whose incomes are generally below the poverty guidelines. I am a past board president of LSNF and have remained a member of the board for over 30 years, where I continue to provide my time and financial resources to support the mission of LSNF. I have provided pro bono services to seniors at the Senior Citizens Center, the Lincoln Neighborhood Center and Bethel Towers Senior Living Facility for over 30-years and I have been recognized by the Florida Supreme Court with the Second Judicial Circuit's Pro Bono Service Award. I am a current and past board member and board president of many other non-profit entities, including but not limited to the Lincoln Center Foundation, the Tallahassee Urban League, the National Achievers Society, the National Association of University Women, Bethel Empowerment Foundation and the NAACP. I have been involved with annual budgets and fundraisers to support program services and have been involved in annual presentations during the CHSP process on many occasions. I have also provided time and financial resources to non-profits through my church, where we have built a 4-bedroom home for one family and purchased a new mobile home for another family in support of the local Habitat for Humanity.

2. There are over 2,400 nonprofit organizations registered in Tallahassee and they have an economic impact of \$3.1 Billion in Revenue. How do you plan to ensure that the nonprofit sector has a voice in the decisions being made in the commission? *

Just as other citizens, nonprofits should and must have a voice and must continue to be heard regarding any County decisions that will impact their ability to maintain and increase the level of services they provide. In addition to exercising the right to be heard during Commission meetings on matters of interest and importance, I will advocate for nonprofits to continue to have representation on any committee and task force authorized by the County to address the needs of citizens and the overall well-being of Leon County. Nonprofits must always have a seat at the table and their voices must always be heard.

3. How would you use the nonprofit sector to advance the vitality of our community? *

The vitality of our community is already dependent in large part on the survival of the nonprofit sector, due to the enormous amount of human services that are provided on so many levels. Direct services to youth and seniors must be maintained at a minimum and increased as need seems to presently demand. There are many, many services the community depends on nonprofits to provide and it is of vital importance for the county to continue and enhance the partnership. Such is clearly in the best interest of the vulnerable population served by nonprofits.

4. What suggestions do you have to improve the financial deficit that exists among nonprofits to serve the needs of our community? *

Nonprofits struggle annually to balance their budgets and at the same time, most maintain and even increase the level of human services they provide. Any efforts to address the financial deficits nonprofits face, must involve an increase in the County's funding level in the budget; however, such would require substantiation. As a new commissioner, I would request a review of the budget allocations for nonprofits and have those compared to other budgetary items. I believe an analysis of the direct human services that are provided on an annual basis by nonprofits would clearly dictate increasing the funding level, because a void is filled that government is incapable of providing.

5. 1 in 10 jobs in Tallahassee are in the nonprofit sector. If our community is concerned about retaining and attracting talent, how would you encourage government leaders to assist in growing the workforce in the social sector? *

To retain and attract talented individuals for the work force, we must be deliberate about our efforts to assist in the creation of jobs that will provide livable wages. When 10% of all local jobs are provided by the nonprofit sector, government must be instrumental in assuring nonprofits are equipped to attract a workforce that is diverse, talented and well paid. Perhaps a stronger partnership should be fostered between government and nonprofits to establish and provide incentives to support job training programs and internships designed to expose talented individuals to the nonprofit workforce. As an elected official, I will advocate for the establishment of a stronger working relationships with the educational institutions in the area to identify students whose majors indicate interest in working in specific areas offered by nonprofits. Government and community leaders must invest in our citizens and young people to attract and grow a talented workforce.

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