

# INIE Candidate Questionnaire - Spring 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 FEBRUARY 21st. We will release candidates' responses, including "no response", to our members and the public on Friday, February 28th.

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

Email address \*

kellyotte2020@gmail.com

Candidate Name \*

Kelly Otte

Name of desired commission seat and/or position.

\*

Leon County Commission, At Large, Group One

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

My relationship with the sector is extensive and goes back 35 years when I started volunteering in the first domestic violence shelter in Carson City, Nevada. Since then, I've consistently volunteered or work for multiple nonprofits simultaneously in Nevada, Virginia and Jacksonville, FL. I came to Tallahassee when I was hired as the Executive Director of Refuge House, where I loved working for 9 years. I left there and went into private consulting, specializing in board development, management training and action planning. I worked with dozens of nonprofits locally, statewide and nationally. In 2006 I became the first Executive Director for United Partners for Human Services and delighted in being part of the expansion of UPHS from 20 active members to more than 100. Between 1996-today I have served on boards of directors of local and statewide boards in every officer role and capacity. Between 2000-2012 I taught related undergraduate and graduate classes at FSU including Legislative Advocacy, Personnel Management, Nonprofit Management, Nonprofits in Disaster and Nonprofits and Social Change for both the Askew School of Public Policy and Administration and the College of Social Work. In 2008, after lamenting the lack of attention to nonprofit issues in the Tallahassee Democrat, I was given the opportunity to create the Notes on Nonprofits column, which I wrote in partnership with Alyce Lee Stansbury until I announced my campaign in January. In 2007 I founded the Oasis Center for Women & Girls and am tremendously proud that both Oasis and UPHS are sustaining nonprofits after all these years. In 2011 I was given an opportunity to work with Pace Center for Girls as the Executive Director for the Leon County and I am still there. The nonprofit sector has enabled me to have a career with some of the most talented, underappreciated professionals in our community. I have been able to affect change in the systems that touch the lives of the people I've served, to work in partnership with team members, volunteers, business and government officials to provide high quality effective services and to increase the community's understanding of the economic impact of nonprofits. It's already been a rewarding, remarkable career and every aspect of my life has been affected by working in the sector.

---

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? \*

I have a deep understanding of the economic impact of nonprofits in Leon County. As the Executive Director of UPHS I worked with Dr. Tim Lynch, an Economist from FSU to conduct the first economic impact study of the nonprofit sector every completed in Leon County. He concluded that every \$1 invested in local nonprofits results in \$4.13 coming into the community. Not only is the sector a major employer compared to other industries and the majority of their \$3.1 billion in revenue is spent on local salaries, benefits and taxes. Arts programs help create a community that new companies want to move to. Theaters and museums provide positive experiences for our citizens. Nonprofits and their employees shop local, buy homes, pay for services which in turn provide other jobs outside of the sector. They also create employment for other Leon County residents through providing job training and placement and offering services like childcare that enable people to work.

Unfortunately, the sector has been often overlooked during conversations about the economic vitality of the community. My intention is to make certain the sector is fully represented in discussions impacting the welfare and future of our community. I will do this by appointing leaders from the sector to committees and asking their opinions about issues. In addition, my own experiences in the sector will increase the voice of the sector in decision making because I have that expertise and perspective.

---

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

A strong nonprofit sector is integral to the vitality of Leon County. It takes all three sectors – government, business and nonprofits – to provide the quality of life that all our citizens need to thrive. Nonprofits, especially human services, have a unique perspective on the needs of the community and where we can do better. I want to make sure we highlight the contributions and services the sector brings to the companies who we hope to attract to do business here. In short, the sector cannot only be viewed for the good services it provides. It must be viewed as a strong economic driver whose leaders deserve a seat at the decision-making tables with the leaders of the other two sectors of Leon County.

---

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

Because the services most nonprofits provide are vitally important to the quality of life in Leon County, we must do whatever we can as a community to make sure our nonprofit sector is as strong as it can be. That doesn't mean I think every nonprofit needs to be fully funded by government or even that every nonprofit should exist. Just like businesses some of them don't have the kind of foundation they need to provide the services our citizens need.

I will work to create a community wide Nonprofit Council, working in partnership with INIE, UPHS and COCA as well as the government and business sectors. The Council will be charged with promoting understanding, coordination and collaboration. The goal of the Council will be to recommend and promote decisions and ideas that can aide the sector in becoming as strong as it can be.

In addition, I will work to revamp the Community Human Services Partnership. That program was originally tasked with seeking grants and funding from outside of Leon County that would support the work of the human services sector and it never materialized. I also believe we must invest more funding in the sector and I'm willing to work hard with other commissioners and the County Manager to collaborate to do that. I'm a big proponent of the Children's Services Council (CSC) and feel confident it will have a positive income on outcomes for our entire community.

Finally, we must have some hard conversations about how to invest long term in the services most likely to reduce crime and poverty in our community. Many nonprofits have the right model to make significant inroads into doing that, but the funding provided locally is not at all consistent. You can't ask nonprofits to reduce crime with a two-year grant. We have programs right here in Leon County that show remarkable research proven outcomes that could potentially change our community quite significantly. Investing in expanding programs proven to be successful will have a domino effect of positive change in the county

---

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? \*

I will work with government leaders to invest in the welfare of the sector by longer term and increased funding to sustain successful programs and workers for many years. I will raise the visibility of the sector by publicly acknowledging and elevating the sector as an economic driver. Other government leaders and I will be certain nonprofit leaders are included at the decision-making tables when we are discussing the quality of life and vitality of the community. I will also be an advocate for all workers by expecting and encourage nonprofits to set the standard by pay living wages in order to receive government funding. I will also work to facilitate more coordination and collaboration among nonprofits in order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness of taxpayer dollars.

---

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms