



# 2024 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE



United Partners  
*for* Human Services  
THE POWER OF THE COLLECTIVE



## Background

United Partners for Human Services (UPHS) is a membership organization that serves as a collective voice empowering human service organizations through advocacy, engagement, and education while positioning each member organization to perform and serve at its highest capacity. UPHS believes our members should be engaging with our local leaders when addressing the growing needs of our community. Nonprofits are, and have always been, essential to every community's financial health.

Tallahassee-Leon County is no different. When addressing hard issues in our community like poverty to focusing on job creation and attracting new businesses, plans should include collaboration with the nonprofit community. Because of this, we have partnered with COCA and INIE in bringing this questionnaire to our constituents.

These questions, and our advocacy, are non-partisan. Candidates were asked to provide their voice regarding the nonprofit sector; this document is inclusive of all responses received, including "non-responses."

## Candidates

The following candidates (and their races) were invited to participate in the survey, as well as their corresponding candidate forum:



**COUNTY COMMISSION, AT-LARGE 1**  
**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15TH AT 3PM**  
**REGISTER FOR FORUM HERE**



**CITY COMMISSION, SEAT 2**  
**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22ND AT 10AM**  
**REGISTER FOR FORUM HERE**



**COUNTY COMMISSION, DISTRICT 4**  
**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29TH AT 3PM**  
**REGISTER FOR FORUM HERE**

# County Commission, At-Large 1

## Carolyn Cummings (Incumbent) County Commission, At-Large 1

*Nonprofit organizations are of the utmost importance as partners with the government to provide a myriad of direct human services to those in need.*

*Government must play an essential role in supporting nonprofit entities, especially in the area of financial support.*

*There is always a burning desire to have the most educated, informed and well-rounded citizens in any community. Hence, supporting those entities who expose the community to various art, culture, history, heritage forums and related activities is very important and essential to achieve and maintain an intellectual level of appreciation for the arts.*

## David Hawkins (Candidate) County Commission, At-Large 1

*I am sure that there are a lot of Nonprofits in Tallahassee that I do not know about but, many of the ones that I do know about do accomplish good things for the People that need their services.*

*A Nonprofit is a Business just like other Businesses so therefore, the City and County has a responsibility to make sure that they abide by the Laws and Regulations just as all Businesses are supposed to.*

*I know that Leon County Schools allow the Students to form Clubs at School and hold their Meetings there after School and that there is a Nonprofit or two that run the School Lunch Program during the Summer Months when School is out for those Months. With that said, I would like to see the Nonprofits for those subjects work with the Leon County School Board to create an After School Program and even do a Summer Program that can work with the Meals Program to help expand the minds of the Students in those Subjects.*

**Q1. How do you view the role of nonprofit organizations in our community?**

**Q2. What role, if any, do you believe government should play in supporting our nonprofit community?**

**Q3. How do you see arts, culture, history, and heritage nonprofits contributing to our community?**

## County Commission, At-Large 1

### Carolyn Cummings (Incumbent) County Commission, At-Large 1

*Government is playing a major role in addressing these issues and should continue to aggressively reduce the number of citizens who are categorized in any one of the aforementioned categories. While Leon County government has allocated millions of dollars annually to nonprofits who house the homeless, feed the hungry, and treat those with mental issues, more must be done to totally eradicate these social ills. Government must not only continue the partnership with nonprofits but more discussions and forums with nonprofits, our developers and business community must take place to arrive at long term solutions that will alleviate the suffering and assure every citizen has the means to provide a good quality of life for themselves and their families.*

*To address the affordable housing shortage in our community, I have supported provisions that provide incentives and other tax related discounts to businesses and developers who set aside a number of units in housing developments for low and middle income families and certainly those who fall within the (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) ALICE population. Nonprofits have traditionally filled gaps and played a major role in assisting ALICE households, by assisting with*

### David Hawkins (Candidate) County Commission, At-Large 1

*Seeing these numbers makes me ask a similar question. I have been watching the City and County Commission Meetings since about 2010 and every Year I see the Nonprofits step up to the Podium speaking about what they do and asking for more Money so they can do more, and the Commissioners usually fulfill their wish and grant them more Money. I know what can be done to lower the Crime Rate and make Communities Safer, it's numbers like these that make me think that the Commissioners need to have an in depth Meeting with each of the Nonprofits that they give Money to and get full detailed Reports on how the Money is being spent and what Results are being achieved so they can decide if they should continue to support that Nonprofit. Like any Business, Nonprofits need to also be accountable.*

*The City and County has a Program that is run by the TLC Nonprofit that assists with Down Payments for First Time Home Buyers. At the time I was looking to buy, 12 Years ago, I qualified for the full amount at that time, \$7,250, the amount is less now. The Money is to be paid back and to make sure, a Lean is put on the Home. I like that Program, it had Rules and Regulations to follow and the Money is paid back. The City and County, if the Funding is there, can expand the TLC to do Rental*

**Q4. Tallahassee-Leon County is named one of the Top 100 Best Places to Live, yet 22% of our children are food insecure, 1,000 individuals experience homelessness on any given night, 20% cannot read or write, and 1 in 6 suffer with a diagnosed mental health disease. Knowing this, what role do you envision local government (in partnership with the nonprofit sector) has in ensuring our community is safe and our neighbors have an adequate quality of life?**

**Q5. What strategies and/or priorities would you bring to the Commission(s) to increase our affordable housing stock, diversify housing types, as well as preserve existing affordable housing stock that includes financially assisted and rent-restricted units in Tallahassee-Leon County? And what role do you see the nonprofit sector playing?**



## County Commission, At-Large 1

### Carolyn Cummings (Incumbent) County Commission, At-Large 1

*childcare and housing financial assistance, which are essential services, to allow a family to survive and not also become victimized by homelessness. As more solutions are defined, nonprofits must continue their level of service.*

*The nonprofit community must continue to fill a role that government cannot possibility fill. I envision nonprofits having an important seat at the table while out of the box long term solutions are discussed and adopted pursuant to a private/public continued partnership with our business community. As plans are adopted, the level of financial assistance from governmental entities to the direct service providers should increase for the provision of increased services.*

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### David Hawkins (Candidate) County Commission, At-Large 1

*Assistance to help with the Rent by \$400 a Month and have special Rules and Regulations in place so the Program is not taken advantage of and it is helping those that truly need the Help. I think the TLC is doing good work here.*

*To be able to answer this properly and correctly, first I think that the Commissioners need to have that in depth Meeting with each of the Nonprofits that they give Money to and to get a full detailed Report from each on what Results are being achieved so they can decide if they should continue to support that Nonprofit.*

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**Q6. How would you like to see the nonprofit community expand its role to enhance the efforts towards economic opportunity, social justice, and health equity?**

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## County Commission, At-Large 1

**Q7. Describe any previous/current employment, board, or volunteer experience you have personally had with the nonprofit community and how it has impacted your personal and professional life?**

**Carolyn Cummings (Incumbent)  
County Commission, At-Large 1**

*My first employment after completing law school was with a nonprofit entity, that provided legal assistance to the indigent population. That employment certainly helped to shape my life long decision to give back to the community, hence, for the last forty-two years I have provided many hours of free legal service to the indigent population.*

**Q8. If currently employed by a nonprofit or serving on a board, do you envision any conflicts of interests that would prevent you from engaging in future policy discussions?**

*I served on several nonprofit boards before my election as a County Commissioner. Because of potential conflicts, I have resigned from those boards.*

**Q9. Tallahassee-Leon County nonprofits served over 60K unduplicated individuals, employed 1 in 10 individuals, and provided an \$3.9B economic impact locally in 2021. Knowing this, how do you envision elevating the value of nonprofits locally through our proven success with job creation, growing our local economy, enhancing the quality of life, and providing access to basic needs**

*I am fully aware of the economic impact nonprofits have on our local economy and of the human services gap that is filled in so many ways by our nonprofit community. I envision my continued support and advocacy for the invaluable role nonprofits play in providing direct services to our community. Government does not have the capacity to address all of the needs and government is not aware of all of the needs. The unique role of nonprofits is vital and essential in our community and that role must*

**David Hawkins (Candidate)  
County Commission, At-Large 1**

*I started a 501(c)3 a couple Years ago that I am slow to get off the ground but am starting to get things organized and when I am ready, I will launch it. It hasn't impacted my life because it is something that I believe that is needed.*

*I do not envision any conflicts because when it is ready to launch, I will not seek any Government Funding and no one will be collecting a Salary except maybe the PR Person if I hire one.*

*If I become a County Commissioner, one of the items on my list is, I plan to create special Seminars for Local Citizens that want to start a new Business in Leon County. The Seminars will include Specialized Speakers that talk about their expertise. Someone from the Florida Department of Revenue to talk about all the Tax Codes and the different types of Taxes, how to fill out the Tax Forms and where they can Pay their Taxes Locally. Someone from the Department of State to talk about the Different Business Licenses and where to Apply for the License. Then all the other Government Speakers that are involved in your Business such as, the Department of Health,*



## County Commission, At-Large 1

### Carolyn Cummings (Incumbent) County Commission, At-Large 1

### David Hawkins (Candidate) County Commission, At-Large 1

*Environmental Agency, Business and Professional Regulations, Department of Insurance and even the State Fire Marshall. Then Speakers from the other Local Businesses to talk about what all they went through to get started and about any issues they had over the first few Years. Too many Businesses fail because they didn't realize everything that it takes to own and operate a Business and make it successful in Leon County. The object is to help Local Businesses Grow, become successful and create Jobs.*

## City Commission, Seat 2

### Curtis Richardson (Incumbent) City Commission, Seat 2

*Our nonprofit organizations are essential. They are a vital resource for building stronger networks, contributing to economic opportunities, and improving the quality of life for our residents. I have had the honor of serving in public and private capacities with nonprofit organizations in our community and I have seen firsthand how the partnerships between nonprofits, government agencies, and businesses can leverage resources to tackle complex issues.*

*During my time in office, I have consistently supported our nonprofit community through many avenues, including the Community Human Service Partnership (CHSP), which has proven an incredibly effective means of providing financial support to some of the most effective and impactful human services nonprofits in our community. In my time on the City Commission, I have helped direct nearly \$30 million to area nonprofits through the CHSP program. In addition to human services funding, I have proudly supported funding for arts, culture, and historical organizations because I know the value they bring to enhancing the vibrancy of our city. As a full service city, we meet countless needs of our residents every day, but we can't meet them all. It's in these times that our nonprofit community steps in and steps up. I'm proud to continue to support this sector in every way we can.*

### Dot Inman-Johnson (Candidate) City Commission, Seat 2

*Nonprofits are major employers, community income generators, and contributors to an improved quality of life for many Tallahassee residents.*

*Government should view non-profits as essential partners in improving living conditions, job opportunities, and the economic stability of our city. As such, the City should continue to support the partnership through continued grant funding, collaborations in seeking federal, state, and foundation funding by committing any required in-kind or cash match, and working together on strategies to identify and direct government resources to the most critical needs in our community.*

**Q1. How do you view the role of nonprofit organizations in our community?**

**Q2. What role, if any, do you believe government should play in supporting our nonprofit community?**



## City Commission, Seat 2

Q3. How do you see arts, culture, history, and heritage nonprofits contributing to our community?

### Curtis Richardson (Incumbent) City Commission, Seat 2

*Tallahassee is fortunate to be home to so many arts, culture, history, and heritage nonprofits, which are pillars of our community's identity and social fabric. They not only foster creativity and innovation but also create spaces for diverse voices and stories to be shared. These organizations enrich the quality of life by offering educational opportunities, preserving our shared heritage, and enhancing civic pride. Not only do these organizations help us preserve and interpret our history, they help us tell the story of who we are by supporting local artists and contributing to a vibrant cultural scene. Finally, they play a significant role in promoting tourism, generating economic impact, and providing a sense of place for residents and visitors alike.*

### Dot Inman-Johnson (Candidate) City Commission, Seat 2

*The arts, culture, history, and heritage of Tallahassee contribute to the unique character of our special city. As a past Florida Arts Council member, I brought much needed funding to local/ regional arts projects like the renovation of the Tallahassee Little Theater (now the Tallahassee Theater), Young Actors Theater, the Monticello Opera House, and greater funding support for FSU, FAMU, the formation of our local arts agency (Cultural Resources Commission) which is now called COCA, and local artists' grants/ fellowships by introducing a requirement that underserved regions of the state receive priority consideration for grant funding. I worked with the Tallahassee Historic Preservation Board in advocating for the adoption of the downtown historic preservation ordinance, a grant to update/preserve the historic City Cemetery, led the community campaign to restore the Greenwood Cemetery and adopt it as a city-maintained cemetery, provided the grant to make the Riley House structurally sound and initial funding for the Riley House Museum, and coordinated the grant application that resulted in a \$302,000 grant for planning the Brogan Museum and Science Center.*

## City Commission, Seat 2

**Q4. Tallahassee-Leon County is named one of the Top 100 Best Places to Live, yet 22% of our children are food insecure, 1,000 individuals experience homelessness on any given night, 20% cannot read or write, and 1 in 6 suffer with a diagnosed mental health disease. Knowing this, what role do you envision local government (in partnership with the nonprofit sector) has in ensuring our community is safe and our neighbors have an adequate quality of life?**

### Curtis Richardson (Incumbent) City Commission, Seat 2

*Public safety and the wellbeing of our community continues to be my first priority, followed closely by creating economic opportunities. These are the top two priority areas in our Strategic Plan.*

*Our recent investments reflect this commitment: Nearly \$3 million this year alone has been dedicated to human services programs, and we've supported over 13,000 low-income residents with housing stability and renovations. We're leveraging over \$18 million from federal, state, and local sources to address affordable housing, with more affordable housing*

*We make housing more affordable when we make it a priority, and we have done just that. Through our efforts, which strategically combine policy solutions and financial support, we have seen a surge in certified affordable housing units unlike we have ever seen before in our city. We have more units recently completed and in the pipeline than the past 25 years combined!*

*I am proud to have pushed for the creation of our Community Land Trust, which lowers housing costs by removing the cost of the land, and to serve on the Tallahassee Lenders' Consortium board where we are doing the work of preserving and developing affordable housing.*

### Dot Inman-Johnson (Candidate) City Commission, Seat 2

*In chapter 2 of my book, POVERTY, POLITICS, and RACE in America (published December 2012 on Amazon), my position on poverty is clearly expressed. Further, at City Commission retreats and meetings, I have regularly reminded commissioners and staff that it is premature to celebrate these recognitions when we have a poverty rate that fluctuates between 20 and 25% as a clear indication of how many of our citizens who are being left behind. The city must have real measurable strategies for poverty reduction, redirecting and targeting more resources to stabilizing low-income census tracts.*

*The best affordable housing is keeping families in housing they are already in and rehabbing it to livable conditions. This can be done through better code enforcement and support for non-profits like CACAA's weatherization program and the Urban League's housing rehabilitation program. Second, the city should set aside more funding for grants and low-interest loans to individual homeowners for emergency home repairs, provide subsidies like land, reduced costs for infrastructure, partnerships for tax credits, to encourage the development of affordable rental and owner-occupied housing. Rental rates are among the highest in the Big Bend when developers can build student housing*

**Q5. What strategies and/or priorities would you bring to the Commission(s) to increase our affordable housing stock, diversify housing types, as well as preserve existing affordable housing stock that includes financially assisted and rent-restricted units in Tallahassee-Leon County? And what role do you see the nonprofit sector playing?**



## City Commission, Seat 2

### Curtis Richardson (Incumbent) City Commission, Seat 2

*projects in the pipeline than in the last 25 years combined!*

*We created the Tallahassee Emergency Assessment Mobile (TEAM) unit and embedded it in our 911 dispatch response to address mental health emergencies and provide people with the help they need when they need it. Since its inception just a few years ago, our TEAM unit has responded to nearly 1,900 mental health calls. Investments like this support the City's long-term strategic priority of building a safe, resilient, and inclusive community, and it is through these efforts and our partnerships with nonprofit partners that we are building a city where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.*

*We have made significant strides towards economic opportunity, social justice, and health equity, but we still have work to do – and that takes all of us. Organizations like UPHS and the Children's Services Council are helping us break down silos and streamline resources to ensure that we are addressing our community's needs effectively and making the biggest impact possible.*

*We were intentional when we made Impact on Poverty one of the seven priority areas in our Strategic Plan and we have prioritized a holistic approach that has proven effective. But we can't do it alone. We need the support of the nonprofit community to ensure the*

### Dot Inman-Johnson (Candidate) City Commission, Seat 2

*complexes for much higher rent. Yet the real housing crisis for many low-income Tallahasseeans is for affordable rentals as documented by the Shimberg Institute in Gainesville. And third, the city should enlist the Chamber, Leon County, the school district, the Florida League of Cities to include a joint position in the legislative lobbying agenda to increase the state affordable housing Trust Fund to address the serious housing needs for low-income residents in the state.*

*I would like to see the non-profit community more involved supporting recommendations for needed change at City Commission meetings, planning retreats, and budget hearings as a unified voice.*

**Q6. How would you like to see the nonprofit community expand its role to enhance the efforts towards economic opportunity, social justice, and health equity?**

## City Commission, Seat 2

### Curtis Richardson (Incumbent) City Commission, Seat 2

*success of our collective efforts, such as our work to increase workforce training opportunities and address food deserts. The nonprofit sector is agile and community-focused and they play a vital role in these efforts.*

*I have been deeply involved in the nonprofit community throughout my career, profoundly impacting my personal and professional life. My volunteer and board roles with organizations like the Tallahassee Lenders' Consortium, March of Dimes, and the Tallahassee Urban League have provided me with valuable insights into community needs and the essential role nonprofits play in addressing those needs. These experiences continue to guide my decisions and actions on policies and investments to ensure our work is as effective as possible.*

### Dot Inman-Johnson (Candidate) City Commission, Seat 2

*I was Executive Director of Capital Area Community Action Agency 1998-2012 when I retired, and was the recipient of the UPHS Non-Profit Leadership Award for leading the agency out of crisis and eminent defunding to a thriving, successful non-profit. National positions include appointment by President Clinton to the National Advisory Committee on the Reauthorization of Super Fund and Co-Chair of the National League of Cities Sub-Committee on Health, Human Services, Education, Children and Families. Also appointed by the American Institute of Architects to Honors Award Jury for Urban Design in America. Regional service includes the Legal Environmental Assistance Foundation which provided low-income communities in Alabama, Florida and Georgia legal support to protect their health and safety against polluters. State-wide board service includes the Florida Affordable Housing Coalition, Florida Prosperity Partnership, Florida Bar Committee on Pro-bono Legal Services, Florida Arts Council and the Florida League of Cities. Local Boards include President of Capital Area Healthy Start, Tallahassee Historic Preservation Board, Friends of Our Parks Board for*

**Q7. Describe any previous/current employment, board, or volunteer experience you have personally had with the nonprofit community and how it has impacted your personal and professional life?**



## City Commission, Seat 2

**Curtis Richardson (Incumbent)**  
City Commission, Seat 2

**Dot Inman-Johnson (Candidate)**  
City Commission, Seat 2

**Q8. If currently employed by a nonprofit or serving on a board, do you envision any conflicts of interests that would prevent you from engaging in future policy discussions?**

N/A

*almost 30 years, Chair of Leon County Affordable Housing Committee, Chair of Tallahassee Affordable Housing Committee, a founding member of the Whole Child Leon Board, and a founding member UPHS and Board member. Current non-profit Board service includes the South City Foundation and the Council on the Status of Men and Boys. I have a wealth of knowledge and experience that informs decisions on any role I hold in the community.*

*No. Rather, I feel all of my board service including current board service gives me a broader understanding of our community's needs, the community resources available to address them, and the gaps requiring local government and broader community intervention.*

**Q9. Tallahassee-Leon County nonprofits served over 60K unduplicated individuals, employed 1 in 10 individuals, and provided an \$3.9B economic impact locally in 2021. Knowing this, how do you envision elevating the value of nonprofits locally through our proven success with job creation, growing our local economy, enhancing the quality of life, and providing access to basic needs**

*The answer is simple: we have to continue to tell the story of the impact the nonprofit community has on Tallahassee, and in doing so we will further expand their reach and impact. I will continue to use my platform to spread the word about all the ways we are partnering with nonprofits to enhance and improve the city we all love. Nonprofits are essential to who we are as a community and how we continue to build a city that opportunities become realities and lives are made better every single day.*

*Continuing local government support while engaging with non-profit leaders in both large and small agencies to develop a path forward for addressing unmet needs.*

## County Commission, District 4

### **Brian Welch (Incumbent)** **County Commission, District 4**

*Nonprofits are vital to helping government fill the gaps and provide services to those most in need.*

*Government should help the non profit community to the extent financially possible in ensuring that services are provided in the areas of most need.*

*They contribute greatly to quality of life and the cultural fabric.*

*Government has a responsibility to ensure that everyone in our community is protected and has access to the best life possible. However, resources are limited so all avenues for partnership and leveraging of additional dollars should be explored.*

### **Dr. Isaac Montilla (Candidate)** **County Commission, District 4**

*Candidate did not respond.*

*Candidate did not respond.*

*Candidate did not respond.*

*Candidate did not respond.*

**Q1. How do you view the role of nonprofit organizations in our community?**

**Q2. What role, if any, do you believe government should play in supporting our nonprofit community?**

**Q3. How do you see arts, culture, history, and heritage nonprofits contributing to our community?**

**Q4. Tallahassee-Leon County is named one of the Top 100 Best Places to Live, yet 22% of our children are food insecure, 1,000 individuals experience homelessness on any given night, 20% cannot read or write, and 1 in 6 suffer with a diagnosed mental health disease. Knowing this, what role do you envision local government (in partnership with the nonprofit sector) has in ensuring our community is safe and our neighbors have an adequate quality of life?**

## County Commission, District 4

**Q5. What strategies and/or priorities would you bring to the Commission(s) to increase our affordable housing stock, diversify housing types, as well as preserve existing affordable housing stock that includes financially assisted and rent-restricted units in Tallahassee-Leon County? And what role do you see the nonprofit sector playing?**

**Q6. How would you like to see the nonprofit community expand its role to enhance the efforts towards economic opportunity, social justice, and health equity?**

**Q7. Describe any previous/current employment, board, or volunteer experience you have personally had with the nonprofit community and how it has impacted your personal and professional life?**

**Q8. If currently employed by a nonprofit or serving on a board, do you envision any conflicts of interests that would prevent you from engaging in future policy discussions?**

### **Brian Welch (Incumbent)** **County Commission, District 4**

*The County will continue to invest in affordable housing and seek to provide conditioning there necessary to leverage federal and state dollars.*

*We should be able to facilitate less expensive housing options by partnering with developers to create a balanced regulatory environment that expedites permits and cuts red tape associated with congestion costs that can then be passed on the consumers.*

*The nonprofit community does a great job of making fits needs known and should continue to foster partnerships with local, state and federal governments to identify dollars in addition to seeking out innovative strategies for solving complex problems.*

*I have been on the boards of COCA, the Foundation for LCS, the Challenger Learning Center and the Chiles High School foundation.*

*All have provided dynamic insights into the needs of the community and the strategies for making the most out of the least.*

*No.*

### **Dr. Isaac Montilla (Candidate)** **County Commission, District 4**

*Candidate did not respond.*

*Candidate did not respond.*

*Candidate did not respond.*

*Candidate did not respond.*

## County Commission, District 4

**Q9. Tallahassee-Leon County nonprofits served over 60K unduplicated individuals, employed 1 in 10 individuals, and provided an \$3.9B economic impact locally in 2021. Knowing this, how do you envision elevating the value of nonprofits locally through our proven success with job creation, growing our local economy, enhancing the quality of life, and providing access to basic needs and safety net services to our neighbors?**

**Brian Welch (Incumbent)**  
County Commission, District 4

*I will continue to listen to and engage with the nonprofit community to seek solutions to our most pressing issues.*

**Dr. Isaac Montilla (Candidate)**  
County Commission, District 4

*Candidate did not respond.*