

**CFLeads**

Community Foundations  
Leading Change

**2023**

**Annual Impact  
Report**



# A Letter to Community Foundation Leaders



Dear Colleagues,

As we reflect on 2023, a year filled with extraordinary achievements, we are honored to share some of the incredible progress CFLeads has made. Thanks to the unwavering support of the community foundation field, CFLeads has navigated a year of remarkable impact, growth, and innovation.

In 2023, we've expanded our team, doubling our capacity and enhancing the depth and breadth of our services, allowing us to support and engage community foundations on a larger scale.

We have had the honor of working with 26 community foundation leaders through our Executive Leadership Institute who have expressed overwhelming satisfaction with the program. CFLeads webinars, in collaboration with many inspiring partners, have reached hundreds of community foundation leaders, sparking important conversations and providing valuable insights on the most pressing issues of our time.

One of the most monumental highlights of 2023 was securing a groundbreaking \$5.2M grant from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support our growing economic mobility work. This funding is a testament to the trust and confidence placed in CFLeads to support the

community foundation field in enhancing economic mobility across the nation. Through our Connecting Communities in the Americas (CCA) initiative, we've strengthened partnerships across the Americas, tackling challenges that extend beyond borders. Additionally, in collaboration with Welcoming America, we proudly launched a Community of Practice for 15 community foundations designed to support their deepening welcoming and belonging work and knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our work in 2023 was inspired by community foundations making meaningful change in their communities and gathering to share best practices with their colleagues. In the fall of 2023, CFLeads invited our community foundation Investors to convene for an exclusive two-day event featuring tailored, high-quality content and networking opportunities, with high-caliber speakers such as Dr. Danielle Allen and Dr. Gail Christopher.

As we look to the future, we are energized by the possibilities. We would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to the entire community foundation field, whose support of CFLeads is crucial in maintaining the momentum we've built. Together, as a field, we can continue to drive meaningful change and shape the future of community foundations. Onward!



**Mary L. Thomas**  
President & CEO,  
CFLeads

**Isaiah Oliver, Board Chair**  
President,  
The Community Foundation  
for Northeast Florida

# MISSION

We envision a world in which community foundations are vital partners in building communities where all residents are prosperous, healthy and secure.

# VISION

Our mission is to help community foundations build strong communities by advancing effective practices, sharing knowledge and galvanizing action on critical issues of our time.



# VALUES

## LEARNING

We believe that organizational excellence and effectiveness are driven by a commitment to ongoing learning.

## KNOWLEDGE

We believe information of all kinds — including data, research and lived experience — is essential to the ability to lead, set sound strategies, and solve problems.

## EQUITY

We believe inclusion and representation matter and that the input and voices of those most impacted by issues and decisions are needed to create the healthy, thriving communities at the core of our mission.

## RESPECT

We value and consider each other in all our interactions.

## COLLABORATION

We believe in creating solutions together, harnessing the ideas, knowledge, and experience of a wide range of individuals and institutions to create the best results.

## WELL-BEING

We recognize that to effectively serve the community foundation field, we must prioritize the well-being of our team, partners, and the communities we support. By fostering a culture of health, balance, and resilience, we ensure that we can sustainably address the needs of the field and drive positive impact.

# FIELD OUTREACH



137

communications sent to community foundation CEOs

30

field outreach meetings completed

5

educational webinars presented to the community foundation field

## OUR YEAR OF INFLUENCE

### CONFERENCES, SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS & ADVOCATING FOR THE FIELD

- Council on Foundations *Leading Locally* Conference in Denver
- CEONet Annual Meeting in Denver
- United Philanthropy Forum Conference in New York City
- ABFE Women’s Retreat for Black Women CEOs
- 17 Rooms at the Rockefeller Foundation Global Headquarters
- Large Community Foundations meeting in Boston
- N.C. Network of Grantmakers (virtual)
- Pennsylvania Community Foundation Association (PACFA)
- 2023 Annual National Conference for Growing Community Foundations in Kansas
- The Center for Effective Philanthropy’s (CEP) National Conference in Boston
- The North Carolina Community Foundation Meeting
- Global Fund for Community Foundations *Shifting the Power* Conference in Bogota, Colombia
- The Generosity Commission (virtual)



# EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

## 100% of respondents in 2023



- Reported having strengthened their understanding of the key elements of community leadership and made progress on their leadership challenge
- Indicated they built peer connections and seeded collaboration through peer learning and collaborative problem-solving



## GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION NETWORK



- Secured funding from California Wellness Foundation
- Cohort 2 participants:
  - Greater Washington Community Foundation (Washington, D.C.)
  - Philadelphia Foundation
  - Rose Community Foundation (Denver)
  - The Indianapolis Foundation
- Added policy component to Network activities
- New & upcoming: creating new ways to engage more community foundations in this work

## 2023 FALL FORUM

*Fort Myers, FL*

- 75+ attendees
- Keynote Speakers:
  - Dr. Daniel Allen
  - Dr. Tiffany Manuel
  - Dr. Gail Christopher
- 18 sessions and plenaries



# ECONOMIC MOBILITY

**\$5.3M**

grant from Gates Foundation to expand offerings, including:



**Extensive field outreach**



**Educational webinar series**



**Five regional convenings**



**Two learning network cohorts of community foundations**

## CONNECTING COMMUNITIES IN THE AMERICAS



- Hosted an international Gathering in Guadalajara, Mexico in February
  - 117 participants
  - 35 community foundations
  - 6 partner organizations
  - 10 countries (8 U.S. states)
- 2023 Peer Resource Sharing outcomes
  - 9 Virtual Sessions
  - 104 participants (increased by 108% from 2022)
  - 52 community foundations (increased by 30% from 2022)
- Learning Exchanges completed
  - 5 exchanges
  - 11 community foundations across Brazil, Costa Rica, Canada, Mexico, St. Croix, USA



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Isaiah Oliver, Chair**  
President

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida

**Rose Bradshaw, Vice-Chair**  
President & CEO  
North Texas Community Foundation

**Simeon Banister (joined June 2024)**  
President & CEO  
Rochester Area Community Foundation

**David N. Cicilline (joined September 2024)**  
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## STAFF

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*Our appreciation to Caroline Merenda and  
Lisette Holmes for their contributions to  
CFLeads' program of work in 2023.*



For more information about CFLeads'  
2023 Financials, [click here](#).



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