



## **The Community Foundation Recognized at Council on Foundations Conference for Award-Winning Public-Philanthropic Partnership with the City of Jacksonville**

*The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida was honored with the HUD Secretary's Award for Public-Philanthropic Partnerships for its role in helping lead the launch of the Office of Strategic Partnerships at the City of Jacksonville's Office of the Mayor*

DENVER, CO – June 15, 2023 – A public-philanthropic partnership in Jacksonville was recognized as a national model yesterday through the Secretary's Award for Public-Philanthropic Partnerships, a recognition offered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Council on Foundations.

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida was honored at the Council on Foundations' Leading Locally conference in Denver for helping to lead the launch of the Office of Strategic Partnerships in the City of Jacksonville's Mayor's Office. The award is given to foundations annually to recognize excellence in partnerships that have transformed the relationship between the public and philanthropic sectors and led to measurable benefits for local communities.

"This year's awardees represent the heartbeat of our great nation," said HUD Secretary Marcia L. Fudge. "Every day, they respond to the call of some of our most vulnerable neighbors, advocate on their behalf, and confront some of our most pressing challenges."

Dawn Lockhart, the inaugural Director of Strategic Partnerships who has led the work since 2016, joined Kathleen Shaw in receiving the award onstage, one of nine partnerships recognized from across the country. The awards were presented by Solomon Greene, HUD's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research, and Kathleen Enright, President and CEO, Council on Foundations.

"We are proud to receive this honor on behalf of many partners, most importantly, the City of Jacksonville, the public sector partner whose work was recognized through the award," said Kathleen Shaw, Senior Vice President, Program and Initiatives, at The Community Foundation. "The city has embraced this position as an essential tool to foster collaboration with the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors. I especially want to express my gratitude to Dawn Lockhart, whose leadership has led to a measurable, positive impact in the community. She has exceeded our expectations for what we hoped to see when we championed the creation of this role."

In 2015, Jacksonville became the first city in the Southeast to create a new, high-level city position to facilitate collaboration between the public sector, philanthropy, nonprofits, and business. The model was inspired by the example of Denver, Los Angeles, Boston, and Michigan, and recommended by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, which calls it a "dynamic" and "forward-thinking" approach. This role has quickly

become an integral administrative role in many other municipalities as the country has continued to respond to challenges and opportunities that impact vulnerable citizens.

The Community Foundation leveraged philanthropic dollars from 15 different funders to pilot the new position. In 2016, the inaugural position was created and the first Director, Dawn Lockhart, was hired. In 2019, Mayor Lenny Curry fully funded the role and expanded the office with a second full-time staff position.

“I am proud that our partnerships with community leaders and organizations are being nationally recognized,” said Mayor Curry. “Listening to the experts and working together with community partners is the most effective way of advancing the greater good, which is the most important mission of good government. We have implemented best practices, leveraged resources and aligned strategies to ensure that the beneficiary of our work, the citizens of Jacksonville, receive the greatest impact and service.”

The Office of Strategic Partnerships has worked on a number of critical quality-of-life issues pertaining to economic growth, health, disaster resilience, and housing access. Examples of impact include the following:

- Jacksonville has decreased homelessness by 39 percent since 2015, even during a worldwide pandemic, through a collaboration led by the Office of Strategic Partnerships among frontline service providers, philanthropy and the public sector.
- The Office of Strategic Partnerships led a network of local leaders to boost participation in the 2020 U.S. Census, leading to an increase of 4.5 percent in self-response from 2010 and increasing Jacksonville’s participation ranking among Florida’s 67 counties from No. 22 to No. 11.
- Jacksonville responded quickly and collaboratively to the COVID pandemic, aligning investments and facilitating weekly update calls to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable. The First Coast Relief Fund pooled support from the city and private funders to award \$5.4 million to 112 organizations for COVID response and recovery.

“The Office of Strategic Partnerships has been essential to our work providing housing and healthcare to people who are homeless in Jacksonville,” said Cindy Funkhouser, President and CEO of the Sulzbacher Center. “Through COVID, hurricanes, downtown development and more, Dawn Lockhart has helped connect us with resources and align our efforts with others’ to improve the quality of the services provided by the nonprofit sector.”

Major private funders of the position included a number of individual philanthropists as well as The Community Foundation, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, the Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation, and the United Way of Northeast Florida. Katie Ensign, as senior program officer at the duPont Fund, was a key leader in advocating for the creation of the position after learning about it at a conference of the Florida Philanthropic Network.



“Philanthropy’s most important role is to pilot innovative approaches that we can prove and then partner with the public sector, which has many more resources, to implement and scale,” said Katie Ensign, now vice president of Community Investment and Impact at Baptist Health. “That’s exactly what happened with the Office of Strategic Partnerships, and I applaud the City of Jacksonville for embracing a new model that is now receiving well-deserved national attention.”

#### **About The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida**

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida ([www.jaxcf.org](http://www.jaxcf.org)), Florida’s oldest and largest community foundation, works to stimulate philanthropy to build a better community. The Foundation helps donors invest their philanthropic gifts wisely, helps nonprofits serve the region effectively, and helps people come together to make the community a better place. Created in 1964, the Foundation has made more than \$695 million in grants since its inception, and manages philanthropic assets that surpassed \$630 million at their 2021 peak.

#### **About the City of Jacksonville**

The City of Jacksonville is the largest city by land mass in the contiguous United States, serving approximately 900,000 residents. Located in Duval County, City of Jacksonville leadership includes the mayor and a 19-member City Council. To learn more about the City of Jacksonville, visit [COJ.net](http://COJ.net).

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