

Community Food Initiatives



BOARD OPERATIONS MANUAL AND ORIENTATION

Revised April 8, 2016

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Welcome to the Community Food Initiatives Board of Directors,

We appreciate your dedication to working for social justice and food security in our region, and are delighted that you will be helping with this important work. Community Food Initiatives (CFI) fills an important need in our community, and we believe that you will find serving on our Board a rich and rewarding experience. As a director, you and your fellow board members are responsible for overseeing CFI's operations, while maintaining our commitment to our mission. This involves establishing our strategic direction, ensuring our compliance with all applicable legal requirements, and keeping CFI financially healthy.

This manual will help you understand your rights and responsibilities as a director so that you can effectively carry out these duties. We encourage you to refer to it whenever you have questions about your Board service. Over the past several years, many groups and organizations have placed a great emphasis on nonprofit governance. We strive to maintain a Board that promotes a culture and structure to meet the new generation of nonprofit standard and see meeting these new standards as the best way to practice our mission and keep our CFI healthy.

There are many individuals and resources to help you in your role as Director. You may draw from the expertise of your fellow directors, the Executive Director and staff. In addition, you may rely on the expertise of individuals retained by CFI to assist. These individuals include our legal counsel, fiscal administrator and insurance broker. In addition, there are several resources available to help you carry out your work (see page 29).

Again, welcome to the Board of Directors. We look forward to working with you, and to many productive and rewarding years together.

AMENDED AND RESTATED ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

OF

COMMUNITY FOOD INITIATIVES, INC.

Non-Profit Corporation

FIRST. The name of said Corporation shall be **COMMUNITY FOOD INITIATIVES, INC.**

SECOND. The place in Ohio where its principal office is located is 94 Columbus Road, Athens, Ohio 45701.

THIRD. The purposes for which the Corporation is formed are:

- A. To research, develop and implement educational food and gardening projects to benefit the Southeast Ohio, and the general public.
- B. To educate and assist low-income people and the general public about gardening and food-related issues.
- C. To conduct and support educational programs related to local food system development, diversification and resiliency as identified by members of the community.
- D. To encourage broad demographic participation in local food access.
- E. To assist in the establishment of an educational clearinghouse for the demonstration of techniques related to small-scale food production and consumption.
- F. And for any other purpose lawful or allowable to a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Ohio.

FOURTH. The Corporation is organized and shall be operated exclusively for charitable, scientific and/or educational purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or corresponding section of any future tax code.

FIFTH. No part of the net earnings of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, directors, officers, or other private persons, except that the Corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article Third hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall be the carrying

on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles, the Corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

SIXTH. Upon the dissolution of the Corporation, the directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Corporation, dispose of all of the assets of the Corporation exclusively for the purposes of the Corporation in such manner or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding section of any future tax code, as the directors shall determine. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the Corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto subscribed our names this _____ day of April, 2016.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
DISTRICT DIRECTOR
P. O. BOX 2508
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: JUL 27 1995

COMMUNITY FOOD INITIATIVES, INC.
C/O JONATHAN SOWASH, ATTY
39 N COLLEGE
ATHENS, OH 45701

Employer Identification Number:
31-1375388
Case Number:
315132005
Contact Person:
JIM SHIMKO
Contact Telephone Number:
(513) 684-3578
Accounting Period Ending:
December 31
Form 990 Required:
yes
Addendum Applies:
no

Dear Applicant:

Based on information supplied, and assuming your operations will be as stated in your application for recognition of exemption, we have determined you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in section 501(c)(3).

We have further determined that you are not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code, because you are an organization described in sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

If your sources of support, or your purposes, character, or method of operation change, please let us know so we can consider the effect of the change on your exempt status and foundation status. In the case of an amendment to your organizational document or bylaws, please send us a copy of the amended document or bylaws. Also, you should inform us of all changes in your name or address.

As of January 1, 1984, you are liable for taxes under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (social security taxes) on remuneration of \$100 or more you pay to each of your employees during a calendar year. You are not liable for the tax imposed under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA).

Since you are not a private foundation, you are not subject to the excise taxes under Chapter 42 of the Code. However, you are not automatically exempt from other Federal excise taxes. If you have any questions about excise, employment, or other Federal taxes, please let us know.

Grantors and contributors may rely on this determination unless the Internal Revenue Service publishes notice to the contrary. However, if you lose your section 509(a)(1) status, a grantor or contributor may not rely on this determination if he or she was in part responsible for, or was aware of, the act or failure to act, or the substantial or material change on the part of the organization that resulted in your loss of such status, or if he or she acquired knowledge that the Internal Revenue Service had given notice that you would no longer be classified as a section 509(a)(1) organization.

Donors may deduct contributions to you as provided in section 170 of the

Letter 947 (DO/CG)

RECEIVED

JUL 31 1995

COMMUNITY FOOD INITIATIVES, INC.

Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to you or for your use are deductible for Federal estate and gift tax purposes if they meet the applicable provisions of Code sections 2055, 2106, and 2522.

Contribution deductions are allowable to donors only to the extent that their contributions are gifts, with no consideration received. Ticket purchases and similar payments in conjunction with fundraising events may not necessarily qualify as deductible contributions, depending on the circumstances. See Revenue Ruling 67-246, published in Cumulative Bulletin 1967-2, on page 104, which sets forth guidelines regarding the deductibility, as charitable contributions, of payments made by taxpayers for admission to or other participation in fundraising activities for charity.

In the heading of this letter we have indicated whether you must file Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax. If Yes is indicated, you are required to file Form 990 only if your gross receipts each year are normally more than \$25,000. However, if you receive a Form 990 package in the mail, please file the return even if you do not exceed the gross receipts test. If you are not required to file, simply attach the label provided, check the box in the heading to indicate that your annual gross receipts are normally \$25,000 or less, and sign the return.

If a return is required, it must be filed by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of your annual accounting period. A penalty of \$10 a day is charged when a return is filed late, unless there is reasonable cause for the delay. However, the maximum penalty charged cannot exceed \$5,000 or 5 percent of your gross receipts for the year, whichever is less. This penalty may also be charged if a return is not complete, so please be sure your return is complete before you file it.

You are not required to file Federal income tax returns unless you are subject to the tax on unrelated business income under section 511 of the Code. If you are subject to this tax, you must file an income tax return on Form 990-T, Exempt Organization Business Income Tax Return. In this letter we are not determining whether any of your present or proposed activities are unrelated trade or business as defined in section 513 of the Code.

You need an employer identification number even if you have no employees. If an employer identification number was not entered on your application, a number will be assigned to you and you will be advised of it. Please use that number on all returns you file and in all correspondence with the Internal Revenue Service.

If we have indicated in the heading of this letter that an addendum applies, the enclosed addendum is an integral part of this letter.

Because this letter could help resolve any questions about your exempt status and foundation status, you should keep it in your permanent records.

We have sent a copy of this letter to your representative as indicated in

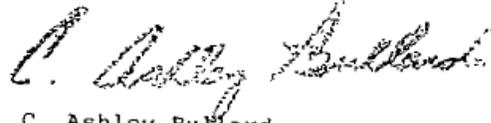
Letter 947 (DO/CG)

COMMUNITY FOOD INITIATIVES, INC.

your power of attorney.

If you have any questions, please contact the person whose name and telephone number are shown in the heading of this letter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "C. Ashley Bullard".

C. Ashley Bullard
District Director

BYLAWS
Community Food Initiatives (CFI)
Revised & Ratified at the CFI Annual Membership Meeting
March, 15, 2014

Article 1: Name

The name of the corporation is Community Food Initiatives (CFI)

Article 2. Purpose

The purposes for which said Corporation is formed are:

- A. To research, develop and implement educational food and gardening projects to benefit the Southeast Ohio, and the general public.
- B. To educate and assist low- income people and the general public about gardening and food-related issues.
- C. To conduct and support educational programs related to local food system development, diversification and resiliency as identified by members of the community.
- D. To encourage broad demographic participation in local food access.
- E. To assist in the establishment of an educational clearinghouse for the demonstration of techniques related to small-scale food production and consumption.
- F. And for any other purpose lawful or allowable to a non- profit corporation under the laws of the state of Ohio.

Article 3. Prohibited Activities

No part of the net earnings of CFI shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to, its members, directors, officers, or others, or other private persons, except that CFI shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article 2 of these Bylaws.

Article 4. Membership

A. Qualifications

CFI shall have members that subscribe to the purposes and basic policies of CFI's ability to carry out its charitable and education purposes. No person shall hold more than one membership. CFI Board retains the right to refuse membership for just cause or activity that is contrary to the purposes of the organization.

B. Rights of Membership

Members shall have the right to vote, as set forth in these bylaws, on the annual election of Directors; the right to vote on amendments to these bylaws; and the right to vote in any election to dissolve CFI. CFI may serve, benefit, or assist persons who are not members,

but may restrict the provision of certain benefits, services, and assistance to members. No member shall be entitled to any dividend or any part of the income of CFI or to share in the distribution of CFI assets upon the dissolution of CFI.

C. Dues, Fees and Assessments

Each member must pay, within the time and on the conditions set by the Board, the dues, fees and assessments in amounts to be fixed from time to time by the board. Those members who have timely paid the required dues, fees and assessments and who are not suspended shall be members in good standing.

Article 5. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors will be comprised of members of Community Food Initiatives (CFI). All individual members in good standing of CFI shall be eligible for a seat on the Board of Directors. The Directors shall solicit participation representative of the SE Ohio community.

A. General Powers

- a. The Directors shall insure that the programs and activities of CFI are:
 - i. Consistent with the purposes of CFI.
 - ii. Legal and consistent with 501C-3 and state nonprofit laws and regulations.
 - iii. Implemented in a fiscally sound manner
- b. Working jointly with the staff the Directors shall develop long range plans for CFI and establish policies.
- c. The Directors shall:
 - i. Approve the acquisition of property and other assets.
 - ii. Authorize fund raising.
 - iii. Approve budgets.
 - iv. Establish personnel policies.
- d. The Directors shall monitor the finances and maintain an overview of the implementation of plans and policies.
- e. The Directors shall require the program staff to furnish project reports and other financial information.
- f. The Directors shall hire, fire, and annually evaluate the executive director.

B. Number and Tenure

There shall be no less than seven (7) and no more than eleven (11) Directors, each serving for a two- year term.

C. Selection

- a. New Directors shall be elected by the existing membership at the Annual Meeting.
- b. Seats will be determined by the plurality of votes cast.
- c. The terms of new Directors shall begin immediately upon election.

- d. Other vacancies on the Board shall be filled by the board membership at regular meetings of Directors. These appointments shall be interim positions, held until the next annual meeting.
- e. All elections of Directors shall be made in accordance with the process of decision making outlined in Article 8.
- f. There shall be no limits on Board of Director terms.

D. Removal/ Resignation

a. Removal

i) A Director may be removed from the Board for specified conduct which is detrimental to the best interests of CFI. A Board Director who misses 2 meetings in a row without notification may be terminated by the Board. A two- thirds majority vote of the occupied seats is required to remove a Board Director.

b. Resignation

i) A Director may resign at any time by giving written notice submitted to the Executive Committee.

Article 6. Officers

There shall be a President, Secretary, Vice President and Treasurer elected by the Board each year. Vacancies among the officers shall be filled by the Directors at regular or special meetings of the Directors.

Article 7. Committees

The Board shall create committees and appoint members to these committees as the need arises. The Board will determine if these committees are to be standing, permanent committees, or temporary, ad hoc committees. There shall be an executive committee comprised of three of the following, the president, secretary, vice- president, treasurer, and director-at-large, that can take action for the directors between meetings of the board. Any meeting of the Executive Committee must consist of at least three of the above. The Executive Committee can take action for the directors between meetings of the board. Any decisions made by the executive committee will be reported to the entire board at the next meeting.

Article 8. Meetings

A. Members Annual Meeting

There shall be an Annual Meeting to be held (between January 1 and April 30) at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Written Notification of the Annual Meeting shall be sent to the members at least two weeks in advance. Nominations for Board of Directors may also be taken on the floor of the annual membership meeting. This mailing will include a list of the candidates for election for Directors and any proposed changes in the bylaws and other business. Decisions shall be reached with a simple majority vote, using all votes received on the date of the

annual meeting, written and verbal. Minutes from the Annual Members Meeting shall be made available to all members.

B. Meetings of the Board of Directors

Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall occur no less than four (4) times per year. Special Board of Directors meetings may be called by a majority of Directors provided that all Directors are given at least one day's notice. A quorum shall be reached with a simple majority vote, provided that a quorum is present. CFI defines a quorum as a simple majority of the current board of directors.

Article 9. (Deleted)

Article 10. Amendments

Amendments to these Bylaws will be proposed by the Board Directors in accordance with the decision-making process as outlined in Article 8, and must be approved by CFI members at the Annual Meeting. Members will receive a written copy of proposed amendment modifications two weeks before the annual members meeting to reach a decision.

COMMUNITY FOOD INITIATIVES

94 COLUMBUS ROAD
ATHENS OH 45701
740-593-5971

WWW.COMMUNITYFOODINITIATIVES.ORG



Board of Directors Candidate Recommendation Form

CFI board members are elected by the CFI membership. Each board member serves a 2 year term, attends a monthly board meeting and participates in committee work. Board members enjoy the benefits of contributing to the mission and vision of the organization, making new relationships and gaining professional experience. The Board of Directors provide guidance, oversight and evaluation of the organization, the program areas, and the Executive Director. Each board member brings their own skills, experience and interests and CFI strives to have a board that helps us deepen our connection with the community we serve, and build our efforts sustainably.

Email nominations to: cfi@communityfoodinitiatives.org

I recommend that the person listed below be considered for election to the Board of Directors:

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Employer: _____
Business/Profession: _____
Degrees/Certifications: _____

Please mark what skills this person could offer.

Skills & Knowledge:

Financial/Data Management Fundraising/Grant Writing Strategic Planning Legal Expertis
 Public Relations Gardening/Agriculture Non-Profit Management Other: _____

Influence:

Business Community University/Education Community Local Community Media Policy
 Other: _____

Interests:

Gardening/Agriculture School Systems/Education Food Security/Health Other: _____

Other active community involvement or experience on other boards:

Current interest in the organization:

What Board activities would interest this person?

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board

Determine the organization's mission and purpose

The mission and purpose, as determined by the Board, articulates what the organization does, why it does it, and whom it serves.

Provide proper financial oversight

The Board helps to develop and approve the annual budget, establishes appropriate mechanisms for oversight, and being and meeting all legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

Ensure adequate resources

The board must ensure that the organization's current revenues are stable and encourage the cultivation of sources of revenue that are sustainable in the long term for both programmatic and internal capacity needs.

Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability

The board should promote transparency and ethical conduct by providing access to appropriate and accurate information regarding finances, operations, and results to donors, stakeholders, and the public.

Ensure effective organizational planning

The strategic planning process enables the board and staff to translate the mission of the organization into measurable goals and objectives.

Recruit and orient new board members and assess board performance

The board can be energized and promote continuous improvement through the influence of fresh perspectives promoted by planned turnover, thoughtful recruitment, and inclusiveness.

Enhance the organization's public standing

Board members are the organization's ambassadors, advocates, and community representatives, roles which are enhanced through developing public relations strategies.

Determine, monitor, and strengthen the organization's programs and services

The board monitors the organization's progress toward mission and evaluates the performance of programs and services.

Select and support the chief executive and assess his or her performance

The board governs in constructive partnership with the chief executive through trust, candor, respect, and honest communication supported by clear expectations, effective policies, and informal and formal performance reviews.

Prepare for Board Meetings

Review the Agenda and all supporting materials prior to Board and committee meetings and be prepared to consider and act on them.

Committees: 2015-16

Executive	Fun(d) Development	Public Relations	Special Events
Ann Brown	Lee Gregg	Kira Slepchenko	Ruth Dudding
Sarah Conley-Ballew	Lori Gromen	Steve Scanlan	Kira Slepchenko
Nancy Pierce	Nancy Pierce	Brian Plow	Lee Gregg (as needed)
Lori Gromen	Ann Brown		
Mary Nally	Kira Slepchenko (grant specific only)		

Committee Chairs:

- Each committee will have an elected chair, of which can only be a board member, to improve its effectiveness and efficiency
- Coordinates meetings and sets agenda, delegates tasks, takes minutes, and reports back to the Board of Directors

Community Members:

- Community members may be selected by committee members to serve on each committee as an advisor to the discussions. However, the final decisions are made by elected board members.
- Community members with expertise will be asked to either provide a presentation to a committee or attend more than one meeting to provide suggestions.

Executive Committee:

- Advising, liaison, and oversight committee for Executive Director
- Work with the Executive Director to establish goals for the year, evaluate performance, and set compensation
- Reports activities to the full board
- Made up of the CFI Board Leadership Positions and Executive Director:
 - Board President
 - Oversees board and executive committee meetings
 - Works in partnership with Executive Director to ensure board resolutions are carried out including board development and strategic planning goals
 - Assists Executive Director in preparing agenda for board meetings

- Assists Executive Director in orienting new board members
 - Oversees hiring process for and supervision of Executive Director
 - Coordinates Executive Director annual performance evaluation
- Board Vice President
 - Serve on executive committee
 - Understand the responsibilities of the Board President and be able to perform these duties in their absence
 - Participate as a vital part of the board leadership
 - Appointed Personnel Advisor (advise on the policies and procedures of personnel management including the hiring process, and staff evaluations)
- Board Secretary
 - Serve on executive committee
 - Ensure safety and accuracy of all board records
 - Manage and distribute board meeting minutes
 - Assume responsibilities of president or vice president in their absence
- Board Treasurer
 - Understand financial accounting for non-profit organizations
 - Manage the board's review of and action related to the board's financial responsibilities
 - Work with the Board President and Executive Director to ensure appropriate financial reports are made available to the board on a timely basis
 - Assist Executive Director in presenting annual budget for board approval
 - Review audit requirements and assist in educating the board about the audit

Fun(d) Development Committee:

- Develop and work towards strategic plan goals for financial management and fund development capacity areas
- Fundraising:
 - Oversee development and implementation of the fundraising plan
 - Monitor fundraising efforts to ensure efforts are cost-effective and donors acknowledged appropriately
- Donor Development:
 - Identify and solicit funds from external sources of support
- Membership Management:
 - Develop criteria for membership, credentialing members, benefits, evaluate programs available to members, and increasing membership levels
- Support grant writing and revenue generation endeavors

Public Relations Committee:

- Develop and work towards strategic plan goals for marketing, communications, and external relations capacity areas
- Community Outreach
 - Represents and promotes organization's services to the community
- Marketing
 - Oversees development and implementation of the marketing plan, including identifying potential markets, their needs, how to meet those needs, and how to promote the programs
- Messaging
 - Enhances the organization's image, including answering the question: "Who is CFI?"

Special Events Committee:

- Ad hoc committee formed for a limited period of time to address the need of organizing special events such as the Harvest Dinner and Membership Meeting
- Plans and coordinates major events
- May work with other committees to develop, fund, and promote events

Conflict of Interest Policy

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

- a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which CFI has a transaction or arrangement,
- b. A compensation arrangement with CFI or with any entity or individual with which CFI has a transaction or arrangement, or
- c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which CFI is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Whenever a director or officer has a financial or personal interest in any matter coming before the board of directors, the board shall ensure that:

1. The interest of such officer or director is fully disclosed to the board of directors.
2. No interested officer or director may vote or lobby on the matter or be counted in determining the existence of a quorum at the meeting of the board of directors at which such matter is voted upon.
3. Any transaction in which a director or officer has a financial or personal interest shall be duly approved by members of the board of directors not so interested or connected as being in the best interests of the organization.
4. Payments to the interested officer or director shall be reasonable and shall not exceed fair market value.
5. The minutes of meetings at which such votes are taken shall record such disclosure, abstention, and rationale for approval.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

I have received and reviewed the Community Food Initiatives Conflict of Interest Policy and agree to comply with its terms. I understand that Community Food Initiatives is a charitable organization that must engage in activities consistent with its exempt purpose to maintain its tax exempt status once approved and remain in compliance with federal and state statutes. Please inform in writing to the Executive Director of Board President of any personal, familial, or professional conflicts of interest.

Signed _____, Board Member

Date _____

Board Member Contract

This contract is NOT a legally binding document, but rather serves as an agreement between Board Members and the organization as to mutual understandings and expectations.

I, _____, understand that as a member of the Governing Board of Community Food Initiatives, I have an ethical responsibility to ensure that the organization does the best work possible in pursuit of its goals. I believe in the purpose and the mission of the organization, and I will act responsibly and prudently as its steward. As part of my responsibilities as a board member:

1. I will work to understand the organization's work and values to the community, represent the organization, and act as a spokesperson.
2. In turn, I will work to understand our constituencies' needs and values to the organization, speak out for their interests, and on their behalf, hold the organization accountable.
3. I will attend at least 75 percent of board meetings, committee meetings, and special events as needed.
4. Each year I will make a personal financial contribution to the organization at a level that is meaningful to me.
5. I will excuse myself from discussions and votes where I have a conflict of interest.
6. I will stay informed about what's going on in the organization. I will ask questions and request information. I will participate in and take responsibility for making decisions on issues, policies, and other matters. I will not stay silent if I have questions or concerns.

In turn, Community Food Initiatives will be responsible to me in the following ways:

1. Will be sent, without having to request, monthly financial reports and an update of organizational activities to facilitate my role as a board member, and so that I may carry out duties responsibly.
2. Opportunities will be offered to me to discuss with the CFI Executive Director and Board President the organization's programs, goals, activities, and status; additionally, I can request such opportunities.
3. The organization will help me perform my duties by keeping me informed about issues in the field in which we are working and by offering me opportunities for professional development as a board member.
4. Board Officers and staff will respond in a straightforward fashion to questions that I feel are necessary to carry out my fiscal, legal, and moral responsibilities to this organization. Board members and staff will work in good faith with me toward achievement of our goals.

Finally, as stated in the board bylaws, as a member of the initial board of directors, I understand that I agree to serve two (2) years on the board.

Signed _____, Board Member

Name _____

Date _____

Board of Directors: Biographies

Ruth Dudding, Board President

Ruth is a Certified Health Educator at the Athens City-County Health Department. She assists schools, worksites, communities and health care agencies to develop policies, systems and environmental changes that promote health. The goal of the Creating Healthy Communities collaborative, which Ruth coordinates, is to make the healthy choice the easy choice. Elected 2013, re-elected in 2015 and 2016.

Sarah Conley-Ballew, Board Vice President

Sarah Conley-Ballew is the founding Director of UpGrade Athens County. Sarah holds a Master of Public Administration (MPA) from the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs at Ohio University. Sarah also has a Bachelor of Specialized Studies with a concentration in Social and Environmental Ecology from Ohio University (2004). Sarah believes that her purpose is to serve as a catalyst for community development in Athens County, demonstrating leadership in social and environmental sustainability projects. She has played a pivotal role in the development of the regional local food economy through her work as Athens Farmers Market Manager and as board Vice President of Community Food Initiatives. Turning her attention to energy sustainability is rooted in a strong interest to develop local solutions to global climate change. Sarah lives with her husband and three wild children on nine beautiful acres in Athens County. Sarah began on the board mid 2013 and was re-elected in 2016.

Lori Gromen, Board Treasurer

Lori works at Ohio University Admissions Department and holds degrees in Biology and Environmental Studies. She has experience working with CFI during her Masters program when she mapped fruit and nut trees on public property in Athens City. She can offer skills in financial and data management and non-profit management, community and university connections. She is primarily interested in food security and health. Elected 2013, re-elected most recently in 2017.

Kira Slepchenko, Board Secretary

Kira works at the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine as a research assistant in biochemistry and molecular biology. In her free time, Kira enjoys growing an heirloom vegetable garden. She shares the fruits she gathers with friends and neighbors. She loves collecting seeds from anything that flowers! Teaching and sharing the fun of gardening is one of her great passions. Because she experienced food insecurity first hand, Kira has a dream to eradicate it from the local community and beyond. She likes to dream big and work hard! Elected 2013, re-elected most recently in 2017.

Ann Brown

Ann joined the CFI board because she believes that no one in America should be hungry, that everyone deserves access to healthy, fresh food. And CFI is one organization in the community which addresses food insecurity and social justice in a constructive and healthy way: teaching people to garden and how to cook fresh food; teaching children the value of sustainable gardening and the joy of growing your own delicious produce; helping to provide the food pantries with fresh local products. We are not just giving people fish, we are teaching them how to fish—it is important and satisfying work. Outside of CFI, Ann is retired from Ohio University, a Master Gardener and has a small business creating unique jewelry from antique buttons. She enjoys being outdoors, kayaking and hiking; cooking, travel, reading and spending time with friends. She has lived in Athens almost 35 years and is still grateful to be a part of this wonderful community. Ann was elected 2013-2014 and was re-elected most recently in 2017.

Theodora Lee Gregg

Lee holds a Ph.D in Botany from Ohio University and has lived in Athens since 1974. She has been active as a professor (now retired), parent of two, and in the community as former Rural Action Board of Directors member for six years. She currently sits on the Athens Tree Commission, Athens County Extension Office Advisory Board, Women's Fund Advisory Board, and is an active Master Gardener. Lee has served on the CFI Board since 2007. Re-elected most recently in 2016.

Steve Scanlan

Steve has an M.A. and Ph.D. in sociology from Ohio State and is an associate professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Ohio University. Motivated primarily by interests in social justice and inequality, he teaches and does research in the areas of hunger and food insecurity, international development, poverty, environmental justice, and social change. He grew up in the countryside near Stoutsville, Ohio where he fostered his love for the outdoors with the family garden, pond, and wooded creek. Steve has lived in Athens since 2006 and enjoys cooking and vegetable/flower gardening with his wife as well as bird-watching, biking, and hiking in the region and beyond. Elected in 2015 and re-elected in 2017.

Rick Vest

My passion for farming began as a child, as I worked on a large produce farm near Cincinnati. I moved to the Athens area to attend Hocking College and decided to put down roots in this beautiful county. I started Vest Berries farm in the early 1980s. The push to get fresh, local, homegrown, healthy food into the hands of our kids and community members is something that is very important to me. As a member of the Community Food Initiatives' Board of Directors, I would bring over 50 years of farming knowledge to the table. Having worked in both the private and public realms, I have experience with everything from executive meetings, to agriculture, to dealing with the general public. I feel very fortunate to be working in a community that values local food as much as I do, and am eager to help share my knowledge with the people in this region. Elected in 2016.

Brian Plow

Brian Plow is an associate professor in the School of Media Arts and Studies at Ohio University, focused on documentary, community storytelling and social justice issues. Brian previously taught at Towson University in Baltimore, where he collaborated on several interdisciplinary media initiatives and projects dealing with a diverse range of issues. He currently teaches in the video production and media for social change undergraduate majors, as well as the Communication for Development graduate program. An OU alum, Brian has been looking for an opportunity to return to Athens, which he believes is one of the most progressive and passionate communities he has experienced. His desire is to facilitate meaningful relationships between the university and the community, contribute to his community and provide transformative opportunities for students. Brian, his wife Melissa, and son, Arlo, recently bought a home and land in Albany, and are starting their own small family farm. Elected in 2016.

Keith Wilde

Keith Wilde is a long time beneficiary of CFI membership and its many programs and in 2014 he served as the CFI School Garden Coordinator. He is interested in serving on the Board of CFI as a way of staying close to this important work . In a neighborly, joyful manner CFI helps the community feed itself. Keith holds degrees in Art and Art Education. His professional work as an artist, landscaper, and educator, regularly connects with topics of sustainability and food access. His background in Art and Education informs his approach to sustainability, gardening, community education, food, and health issues. He believes that imagination and creative choices will play a role in helping our community succeed. Elected in 2016.

Staff Biographies

Mary Nally, Executive Director

Mary has been the Director of CFI since April, 2012. As a native of Southeastern Ohio, she has a personal interest in contributing to the sustainability of the Athens area by developing strong community resiliency. Mary holds a Masters of Science in Environmental Studies from Ohio University and a Bachelors of Arts in Social Work. Social justice issues have been the driving force for her career; for ten years she worked with the homeless, and persons with chemical dependency and brain disorders, before returning to Ohio to focus on food justice issues. Mary serves on the Athens Food Policy Council and Athens Healthy Community Coalition.

Ryan Leach, Donation Station Manager

Ryan graduated from Ohio University with a degree in Community Health Services, spent two years as a COMCorps member with Rural Action and working at the Chesterhill Produce Auction. As a native Ohioan, Ryan is dedicated to community development and creating meaningful volunteer opportunities to get people involved in the the local food movement.

Allison Hall, AmeriCorps VISTA Member

Allison recently graduated from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio with a bachelor's degree in Public Administration and Environmental Science with a minor in East Asian Studies. She was heavily involved in the Miami and local Oxford community as a member of Green Oxford, a student organization dedicated to sustainability, as well as Alpha Phi Omega, a service fraternity. She is excited to connect at the same level with the Athens community, promoting the importance of food sustainability.

Janice Brewer, Community Garden Coordinator, AmeriCorps-COMCorps

Janice graduated from Ohio University in a self guide degree titled Sustainable Food Systems. Since moving to Athens in August 2013, she has fallen head over heels in love with the Athens community and its love of creating a healthy vibrant local food driven community. This is where Janice feels most at home. Janice is dedicated to continuing her food journey and opening the garden gate for others. Janice also loves cooking, biking, yoga, and friends!

David Doddridge, School Garden Coordinator, AmeriCorps-COMCorps

David graduated from Ohio University with a degree in Sustainable Agriculture, Gardening, and Cultural Perspectives. He has always loved the outdoors since he was a child, as well as cooking and eating delicious meals. He was able to combine his two passions when he began working with the local Athens community to get people interested in local food, working toward attaining a more sustainable way to produce food.

JaMilla Holland, Donation Station & Discovery Kitchen Coordinator, AmeriCorps-COMCorps

JaMilla is from Columbus, Ohio. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Health and Human Kinetics with a concentration in Exercise Science from Ohio Wesleyan University. She's passionate about learning and teaching about food access and affordable, nutritious lifestyles. She enjoys reading, cooking, exercising, and singing and dancing anytime she can.

Jess Chadwell, Ridge and Hollow Seed Alliance Developer

Grew up on a small livestock farm in Champaign County, West of Columbus. Her academic background in Psychology and Social Work. Served 2 1/2 years as an AmeriCorps Member with Community Food Initiatives as the Community Gardens Program Coordinator. Currently, working to create a micro-regional seed company (Southeast Ohio Seed Savers) to help secure the future of our local food system and invigorate our Appalachian heritage through incentivizing and celebrating regional seed saving.

Margaret Hoff, Fiscal Administrator

Margaret moved back to Athens, Ohio in 2013 with her family, as they wanted to raise their daughter in an amazing community that encourages sustainable living, healthy, local food and supports a wide variety of people working to benefit the region. Margaret is also the administrator of Appalachian Institute for Creative Learning, the fiscal administrator for Live Healthy Appalachia and is a board member of The Birth Circle. Margaret holds a Masters of Arts in Women's Studies from Ohio State University and a Bachelor of Arts in English from Mount Union University. Margaret lives outside of Athens with her husband & daughter, with their dog, cats, chickens and a couple of goats.

Staff & Board Contact List

Offices:

94 Columbus Rd
Athens OH 45701
740-593-5971

Staff:

<p><i>Mary Nally</i> <i>Executive Director</i> cfi@communityfoodinitiatives.org 740-591-0964</p>	<p><i>Ryan Leach</i> <i>Donation Station Program Manager</i> donationstation@communityfoodinitiatives.org 740-637-4433</p>
<p><i>Allison Hall</i> <i>AmeriCorps VISTA</i> allison@communityfoodinitiatives.org volunteer@communityfoodinitiatives.org 330-338-2058</p>	<p><i>JaMilla Holland</i> <i>Americorps-COMCorps, Donation Station & Discovery Kitchen Coordinator</i> discoverykitchen@communityfoodinitiatives.org 614-531-5685</p>
<p><i>Jess Chadwell</i> <i>Ridge & Hollow Seed Association Developer</i> jess@communityfoodinitiatives.org 937-925-2554</p>	<p><i>Janice Brewer</i> <i>Americorps-COMCorps, Community Garden Coordinator</i> gardens@communityfoodinitiatives.org 937-581-0780</p>
<p><i>Margaret Hoff</i> <i>Fiscal Administrator</i> mmrah@hotmail.com 937-515-8154</p>	<p><i>David Doddridge</i> <i>Americorps-COMCorps, School Garden Coordinator</i> schools@communityfoodinitiatives.org 419-787-8956</p>

Board Members:

<p><i>Ruth Dudding</i> <i>President</i> (c) 740-591-5194 (h) 740-696-1055 dudding@health.athens.oh.us Elected 2013, 15, 16</p> <p><i>Sarah Conley-Ballew</i> <i>Vice President</i> 740-591-1990 sarahwarbler@gmail.com Elected 2014, 16</p> <p><i>Kira Slepchenko</i> <i>Secretary</i> 740-591-5814 kiraruger@gmail.com Elected 2013, 15, 17</p> <p><i>Lori Gromen</i> <i>Treasurer</i> 740-592-4104 lorigromen@gmail.com Elected 2013, 15, 17</p> <p><i>Rick Vest</i> (c) 740-541-1169 vestberries@yahoo.com Elected 2016</p>	<p><i>Ann Brown</i> (h) 740-592-1421 (c) 740-707-0462 brownna@ohio.edu Elected 2013, 15, 17</p> <p><i>Lee Gregg</i> 740-591-7714 tleegregg@gmail.com Elected 07, 09, 11, 13, 15</p> <p><i>Steve Scanlan</i> scanlans@ohio.edu (c) 740-591-7767 Elected 2015, 17</p> <p><i>Keith Wilde</i> 740-707-6314 wilde.keith@gmail.com Elected 2016</p> <p><i>Brian Plow</i> 740-591-5007 plow@ohio.edu Elected 2016</p>
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New Board Member Orientation Checklist

Board Member Name: _____

Orientation Completion Date: _____

History and Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Description of CFI’s history and impact in the region ❖ Review of CFI’s mission and all current programs and key players 	Executive Director
Board Operations Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Description of organizational support and decision-making structure ❖ Review of Board Operations Manual ❖ Sign Board Member Contract and Conflict of Interest Disclosure ❖ Review of standardized expectations of correspondence, attendance and participation at board and committee meetings. Also review Board member’s interests and expectations of being on CFI’s Board ❖ Share the Board of Directors Dropbox Folder ❖ Review how to understand the budget 	Executive Committee
Partners and Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Overview of organizational partners within the local food system and history of collaboration ❖ Review of community’s background including history and data regarding poverty, food insecurity and high chronic disease rates ❖ Overview of stakeholder groups and individuals CFI’s programs serve 	Executive Director
On the Ground: How CFI Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Tour of office and ACEnet facilities ❖ Shadow at least 1 program area (Community Gardens, School Gardens, Donation Station, etc.) ❖ Attend first board meeting 	Executive Director and CFI staff
Board Member’s Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Review Board member’s interests and expectations of being on CFI’s Board ❖ Confirmation of board member’s address, phone numbers, email address, best time to contact, best time for meetings 	Executive Committee

How to Use Dropbox

- CFI uses an online application called Dropbox to share and save documents. For the Board of Directors, a specific folder was developed for this same purpose.
- To access documents related to the Board of Directors, go to the following link to a Dropbox folder: <https://goo.gl/LARO5T>
- This folder will be updated frequently, so please save/bookmark the link for your own personal use. However, this is an optional resource, and most information will be communicated via email and at meetings.
- Documents in this Dropbox folder include:
 - Financial Reports
 - Annual Reports
 - Board Meeting Agendas and Minutes
 - Committee Agendas and Minutes
 - Strategic Plan
- If you find anything confusing or are unable to locate any documents, please contact CFI's Executive Director at cfi@communityfoodinitiatives.org

Appendices

- Strategic Plan Public Document
 - Letter to the Community
 - Executive Summary
 - Organizational Description
 - Vision, Mission, and Values
 - Strategic Goals and Objectives
- Financial Records/Data
 - Current Year Cash Flow Projection
 - End of Year Accountant's Report from Previous Year
- Annual Report
- Board Meeting Agendas and Handouts