

Executive Summary

The North Carolina Community Foundation (NCCF), one of the state's most trusted philanthropic institutions, is conducting a national search for its next President & CEO. Over the past two decades, NCCF has grown sixfold in assets, expanded its statewide reach, and established itself as the go-to philanthropic partner for donors, communities, and civic leaders across North Carolina. The incoming President & CEO will step into a high-functioning organization with a dedicated team, a proven model, an extraordinary platform for impact, and room to lead what comes next. This is not a maintain-and-manage role. North Carolina is changing, philanthropy is changing, and the communities NCCF serves face challenges and opportunities that will require genuine leadership, not just stewardship. The board seeks a President & CEO who brings the vision to look around the corner and see what more NCCF can become and the energy to build it. The goal is clear: deepen the foundation's presence in rural North Carolina, grow its donor base across generations, and strengthen collaborative partnerships across the philanthropic ecosystem.

Context

NCCF was founded in 1988 with a clear and enduring mission: to inspire North Carolinians to make lasting and meaningful contributions to their communities. The founder Lewis R. Holding knew that executing on the foundation's mission would involve helping rural communities build and grow permanent local philanthropy. To do that, he envisioned an institution committed to the long game, one willing to go where others did not and turn the collective generosity of donors into permanent sources of community support.



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2025 Organizational Snapshot

1,357

Total charitable funds

48

New funds

\$650M

Assets under management

\$38M

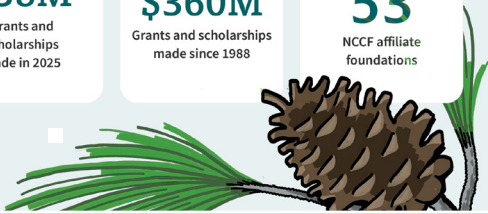
Grants and scholarships made in 2025

\$360M

Grants and scholarships made since 1988

53

NCCF affiliate foundations



For additional information see
[2025 Impact Report](#)

That founding vision has guided NCCF for four decades. Jennifer Tolle Whiteside joined NCCF in October 2006 as its second President & CEO and will step down at the end of 2026 after two decades of transformational leadership. Under her tenure, a dedicated team has driven remarkable growth: assets have risen from \$100 million to over \$600 million, charitable funds have increased from 900 to over 1,300, and annual grants and scholarships have grown from \$4.5 million to more than \$38 million, with more than \$360 million distributed in total. Together, the team has deepened NCCF's presence in rural communities, developed a personalized, supportive giving experience for donors, strengthened the network of affiliate community foundations, and built the culture of trust, collaboration, and organizational discipline that defines the institution today. When Hurricane Helene devastated western North Carolina, NCCF received more than \$33 million in contributions, which is a testament to the credibility the foundation and its people have built over four decades of showing up.

The next President & CEO inherits a platform built for more. The staff, donors, affiliates and communities who have grown alongside NCCF are energized by what has been built and eager to see what more is possible. This is a moment that calls for a leader with their own vision, their own expansive network of relationships, and their own sense of what NCCF can become. The incoming leader will earn trust through presence, humility, and genuine curiosity and then take the foundation further than it has gone before.

The Organization

NCCF is in a meaningful moment of organizational evolution, as it grows from a mid-to-large community foundation to a larger, more complex institution. The incoming leader should arrive equipped for that trajectory. The foundation has a \$7.5 million operating budget, over 1,300 funds and serves a network of [53 affiliate community foundations](#) operating across 60 of North Carolina's 100 counties. Its robust operating endowment, which supports the statewide network, is a rare and strategically significant asset, providing flexibility, buffering against market volatility, and enabling NCCF to show up in communities regardless of economic conditions. The operating endowment is, in many respects, the financial expression of the foundation's values.

Serving as a trusted resource for donors is central to NCCF's identity. The foundation's expertise in charitable giving and deep community knowledge connect donors to what they care most about. NCCF helps fulfill donors' charitable vision now and in the future, whether that's supporting a specific cause or honoring a loved one with a scholarship.

NCCF's team makes giving easy, streamlining the process and serving as a collaborative partner. The foundation provides clear, accessible information about donors' giving and the foundation's stewardship. Most of all, NCCF maintains donors' trust and maximizes their impact.

NCCF's affiliate structure is central to its identity and rural mission. Each affiliate knows its community intimately, tells its own story, and makes decisions close to the ground. This is a model that requires trust, not control, on the part of leaders.



Affiliate Impact Committee

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Core Values



COMMUNITY

We strive to uplift the well-being of all North Carolinians. Throughout our work, we value varying viewpoints.

We believe diverse voices, engagement and participation are essential in building and sustaining thriving communities.



PARTNERSHIP

We believe in the transformative power of collaboration to meet shared objectives. We focus on rural North Carolina and bring an understanding of North Carolina's rural communities to donors.

We encourage and celebrate teamwork, leverage expertise and resources, and communicate openly. Through trust and evolving partnerships, we achieve collective impact that is otherwise not possible.



STEWARDSHIP

We help our donors and fundholders reach their goals and build philanthropic legacies that will support communities and causes now and in the future.

We exercise honesty, integrity and responsible care in the management of the funds entrusted to us.

Nearly 300 North Carolina nonprofits hold agency endowments at NCCF, reflecting the foundation's deep partnership with the nonprofit sector beyond grantmaking. NCCF's solid track record of collaboration creates synergies that deepen its impact and build the awareness and trust that make permanent philanthropy possible across the state.

The foundation also partners with donors to administer scholarships for students across the state, with criteria for each scholarship determined by the donor. In 2025, NCCF [awarded](#) over \$3 million in scholarships to over 500 students.

NCCF is a "big tent" organization, purposefully nonpartisan, inclusive, and genuinely welcoming across political, geographic, and generational lines. Its impact is distinctly felt in the places where philanthropic infrastructure does not otherwise exist—in rural communities where NCCF and its affiliates bring permanent philanthropy, donor education, and endowed resources.

The power of NCCF's model is perhaps best understood through the stories of the people it serves, from a [lifelong Bertie County resident](#) who entrusted nearly \$23 million to NCCF because he trusted the local affiliate he helped build, to a [Moore County giving circle](#) that used community data provided by NCCF to close a pre-K access gap, to the [Disaster Relief Fund](#) that has awarded nearly \$22 million in long-term recovery grants since Hurricane Helene, to the [lifelong educator](#) who established a scholarship to support students in Johnston County attending her alma mater. These stories repeat themselves across nearly four decades, 60 counties and 53 affiliates.

The President & CEO's Charge

The incoming President & CEO will inherit a mature, pressure-tested organization with disciplined systems, a strong team, and a culture of intentional management. This readiness is demonstrated most vividly in its Hurricane Helene response, which the foundation absorbed without missing a beat. Funds were raised, grants to nonprofits for long-term recovery were deployed within months, and the affiliate network in western North Carolina provided valuable information about the needs on the ground. The foundation is now on a growth trajectory that will require it, and its next leader, to think and operate strategically at increasing scale, translating NCCF's people-centered culture into durable institutional practice as the organization grows in assets, complexity, and reach. Key priorities for the new leader include:

- **Statewide relationships.** The geography of the job is both a challenge and a strength. The President & CEO must be a visible, active presence across North Carolina, traveling the state, deepening relationships with fundholders, affiliate boards, community leaders, and emerging partners, and elevating NCCF's profile. Physical presence matters; this is a leader who knows when to get in the car and finds joy in doing so.
- **Donor development and next-generation engagement.** The President & CEO must be an active and confident fundraiser, comfortable cultivating and closing significant gifts and modeling that behavior for the team, with an understanding that relationships built today may yield transformational planned gifts decades from now. There is new and untapped potential in deepening relationships with existing fundholders, including outreach



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to second-generation fundholder families and younger donors who may hold differing perspectives on permanent philanthropy. Trusted relationships with attorneys, financial planners, CPAs, and wealth managers remain among the most important channels for donor development; the President & CEO must deepen those partnerships as a strategic priority. The President & CEO must also be a champion for what distinguishes NCCF from commoditized donor advised fund platforms offered by financial institutions, namely genuine civic leadership, deep community knowledge, personalized service, and a demonstrated record of showing up in ways no financial product can replicate.

- **Forging strategic connections.** North Carolina is a state in motion, attracting new companies, industries, and leaders at a significant rate. One of the most exciting dimensions of this role is the opportunity, and the responsibility, to serve as a strategic connector. The President & CEO is privileged to share the stories of North Carolina's communities and, as the face of the organization, serve as a visible, credible advocate for rural North Carolina and the long-term investment required to sustain it. NCCF's nonpartisan identity gives its leader a unique platform to build and actively steward a broad network of relationships, connecting philanthropic peers, civic and government leaders, university presidents, and economic development partners in a personal and proactive way. This is evidence-based community leadership that NCCF is uniquely positioned to provide.
- **Affiliate trust, clarity, and network growth.** The affiliate network is NCCF's greatest asset in reaching rural communities. Affiliates, their boards, and more than 600 volunteers generate long-term, wide-ranging connections across the state. Local boards review more than 1,600

grant applications and award approximately 600 grants totaling \$1.6 million annually across two grant cycles. These are decisions made by people who live, work, and are rooted in their communities. NCCF supports local decision-making with community needs assessments drawn from trusted data sources. This information gives affiliate boards a clear, current picture of economic conditions, food insecurity, education, health and other conditions on the ground so that their grantmaking is guided by local data. The President & CEO must be a genuine partner to affiliates, listening carefully, understanding what each region needs, and advocating clearly for NCCF's role and value. Structural clarity across a network of varying capacity will be an ongoing priority. The incoming President & CEO should be committed to increasing impact, strengthening the affiliate network, and ensuring NCCF and its affiliates best serve communities.

- **Collaborative ecosystem leadership.**

NCCF operates in a spirit of partnership, not competition, with North Carolina's other community foundations and philanthropic organizations, and the next leader will be a visible and active participant in that ecosystem. This means investing in peer relationships with the state's other community foundations, maintaining productive working relationships with major statewide funders, and engaging national networks such as the Council on Foundations and Philanthropy Southeast as both a learner and a contributor. A healthy philanthropic ecosystem benefits all North Carolinians and NCCF's credibility in this space is hard-won. The next leader will protect and deepen NCCF's reputation for collaboration.

- **Vision and innovation.** NCCF's next leader will bring their own perspective on what more is possible. The priorities above reflect the current organization, but the right candidate will arrive



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with curiosity about what comes next—with new models for community philanthropy, with thoughts about emerging opportunities the foundation has not yet imagined, and with a point of view on how NCCF can continue to grow its relevance and reach in a changing philanthropic landscape. The board welcomes that ambition.

The Ideal Candidate

NCCF seeks a leader who is as comfortable at a kitchen table in rural North Carolina as in a boardroom in Raleigh, someone who can move fluidly across constituencies, geographies, and conversations with ease and authenticity. The ideal candidate will bring:

- **Leadership and management.** A significant track record in executive leadership, ideally having led an organization of comparable or greater scale. Calm and steady as a baseline, the new leader provides stability and confidence before bringing vision and strategy. The President & CEO empowers others, nurtures growth, and shares knowledge generously. An inclusive leader, they will manage and develop a diverse and growing staff across all aspects of performance management with experience budgeting and planning for a growing organization. They understand that the people closest to the work hold essential knowledge and create real channels for staff at every level to contribute ideas, raise concerns, and shape the direction of the organization. Board savvy is also essential: the incoming President & CEO will be a skilled and trusted partner to the board, fluent in governance and investments, comfortable with accountability, and able to engage board members as strategic thought partners while maintaining clear and appropriate boundaries between governance and management.

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- Philanthropic and asset-building acumen.** Experience in the philanthropic sector, ideally with a community foundation, family foundation, or related institution, is strongly preferred. The new leader is a skilled and confident fundraiser who understands that development is a core President & CEO responsibility, not a delegated one. They genuinely find working with donors and professional advisors to be one of the most meaningful parts of the role. Deep familiarity with donor advised funds, the arc from donor education to planned giving, and the community foundation's distinctive advantages is essential.
- Rural fluency and authentic community presence.** Genuine experience in and comfort with rural communities is a requirement. The new leader must be skilled at finding common values across constituencies that may seem very different on the surface, bridging urban and rural, donor and grantee, institutional and grassroots. This requires high emotional intelligence and the ability to connect genuinely across a wide range of human experiences and settings. The new leader will build trust through consistency, humility and presence. They will always convey an attitude of unconditional respect. Another must-have is a genuine curiosity about the state, its people, and its communities. Above all, the next NCCF leader is prepared to love all of North Carolina—every distinctive part of it. As chief cheerleader, the next leader should also be comfortable promoting the foundation at community and sector events, from media interviews to podcasts to conference panels.
- Partnership.** The President & CEO is deeply collaborative by nature, experienced in building and sustaining partnerships, supporting distributed decision-making, and creating conditions for others to flourish. They are quick to take responsibility and generous in giving credit.



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- **Organizational agility.** NCCF's next President & CEO brings a bias toward action and a talent for seeing the big picture—connecting dots across a complex, multi-layered organization. They are adept at holding simultaneously the breadth of fundholder and affiliate relationships and the depth of NCCF's asset management responsibilities without over-indexing on either. Solutions-oriented, they are comfortable navigating political complexity and handling sensitive information with discretion. They can serve a statewide, politically diverse constituency and earn the trust of all.
- **Values alignment.** Community, partnership, and stewardship are not aspirational statements for this organization, they are operational realities. The right leader models these values in every interaction, at every level of the organization. The CEO who stumbles here is one who leads from the top rather than through others, who delegates donor relationships rather than owning them, or who treats the affiliate network as an administrative function rather than the heart of the mission.

The Relationships

The President & CEO of NCCF operates at the center of a highly interconnected web of relationships across geography, sector, culture, and community.

The President & CEO

Reports to:	the Board of Directors
Oversees a staff of approximately 40 with four direct reports:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chief Financial & Administrative Officer ▪ Chief Marketing & Communications Officer ▪ Vice President of People & Culture ▪ Vice President of Philanthropic Services
Stewards key relationships with:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fundholders and donor families ▪ Professional advisors: attorneys, financial planners, CPAs, and wealth managers ▪ 53 affiliate community foundation leaders ▪ Leaders of North Carolina and national peer foundations ▪ Grantees and nonprofit partners ▪ Corporate and civic leaders across North Carolina, particularly those serving rural communities

Compensation

The foundation offers a competitive compensation and benefits package. NCCF is committed to attracting a leader of the highest caliber and will work to meet the expectations of an exceptional candidate.

Location

NCCF's headquarters is in [Raleigh](#), North Carolina, where the President & CEO and the majority of the foundation's employees are based. About a quarter of the staff work in the regions of the state they serve.

For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email

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or call **Michelle Hall**, **Patti Kish** or **Lynn Rudisill** at 404-BoardWalk (404-262-7392).