Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta Names Lauren Koontz President and CEO

Longtime Atlanta civic and nonprofit leader brings three decades of experience in enterprise leadership, philanthropy, and community partnership

- ***Lauren Koontz will become president and CEO on December 1, bringing three decades of experience in enterprise leadership, philanthropy, and cross-sector partnership.***
- ***Her selection follows a broad national search focused on leadership record, community credibility, donor and philanthropic experience, organizational impact, and collaboration at scale.***
- ***She joins the Foundation in its 75th year as CFGA looks to deepen connections among donors, nonprofits, businesses, and civic partners across Greater Atlanta.***

ATLANTA (October 6, 2026) — The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta has named Lauren Koontz its next president and CEO, effective December 1. Koontz currently serves as president and CEO of the YMCA of Metro Atlanta, where she has led one of the region's largest and most established nonprofit organizations since 2019.

Koontz will join the Community Foundation during its 75th anniversary year as the fifth leader in its history, bringing deep relationships across metro Atlanta and extensive experience in enterprise leadership, donor development, and cross-sector partnerships. At the Foundation, she will work with donors, nonprofits, businesses, and civic partners to connect generosity with opportunities to make a difference across Greater Atlanta.

Ryan Wilson, CEO and co-founder of The Gathering Spot and a member of the Foundation's Board of Directors, chaired the CEO search committee. The Board conducted a broad national search with the support of executive search firm BoardWalk Consulting, with a deliberate emphasis on leaders with a deep record of impact in metro Atlanta and respect for the region's challenges and opportunities. The search reached leaders with a wide range of backgrounds and experience and drew on input from Board members, Foundation staff, donors and community partners. Candidates were evaluated on their leadership record, community relationships, philanthropic and donor experience, organizational impact, and history of effective collaboration at scale.

“Our region is working through complex challenges, and our nonprofits and community groups need support more than ever,” Wilson said. “This is an important time for philanthropy to be a galvanizing force for good. We want more families and companies to turn to the Foundation as both a trusted home for their giving and a partner in scaling their impact. Lauren knows how to bring donors, nonprofits, community groups, businesses, and government together around common goals. She is the right leader for this moment.”

Koontz joined the YMCA of Metro Atlanta in 2012 and became its first woman president and CEO in 2019. Today, she leads a $150 million-plus organization with more than 4,000 employees serving more than 240,000 people annually across metro Atlanta. During her tenure, she has strengthened partnerships with corporations, health care systems, school districts, nonprofits, and government agencies and led the organization’s largest comprehensive fundraising campaign, raising more than $60 million.

Koontz has also worked closely with the Foundation. During the 2025 federal shutdown, the YMCA of Metro Atlanta, the state’s largest Head Start provider, worked with the Foundation and partners across the region to keep Head Start programs open for more than 6,500 Georgia children. Koontz’s team later brought the same model to Augusta.

Her career also includes fundraising leadership at Emory University and Mount Vernon Presbyterian School. At Coxe Curry & Associates, she played a key role on the team supporting the $400 million Greater Grady Campaign for Grady Health System. Her civic leadership includes service with The Fox Theatre, YMCA of the USA, the Truist Atlanta Community Advisory Board, and other regional organizations.

“Lauren understands Atlanta because she has spent years working across the organizations, communities, and relationships that shape this region,” said Julia Houston, chair of the Community Foundation’s Board of Directors. “As we celebrate 75 years of connecting generosity with community needs, her leadership gives us an opportunity to build on that legacy and strengthen the connections among the people who want to make a difference and the organizations and ideas moving our region forward. We’re thrilled to welcome her to the Community Foundation.”

“Atlanta has shaped my career and my sense of what is possible when people come together around a shared purpose,” Koontz said. “The Community Foundation has a remarkable opportunity to connect people who care about this region with the organizations, ideas, and opportunities that can make a difference. I’m excited to build

on the Foundation's 75-year legacy and help shape its next chapter alongside the staff, donors, and community partners who care about Greater Atlanta's future."

Virginia Hepner, who has served as interim president and CEO since August 2026, will work with Koontz to support the leadership transition.

"We are deeply grateful to Virginia for the steady, thoughtful leadership she has brought to the Foundation during an important period of transition," Houston said. "She stepped in at a critical moment, kept the organization moving forward, and helped create the stability and momentum that will support Lauren's arrival. Virginia was deeply engaged with the Foundation before stepping into this role, and we're grateful that she will continue that service in a volunteer capacity. Her leadership and commitment to the Foundation have meant a great deal to our Board, staff, and partners across the region."

About the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

For 75 years, the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta has helped turn donor generosity into action. Since 1951, the Foundation has granted more than $3.6 billion and counting to nonprofits and causes across Greater Atlanta and beyond.

Today, the Foundation is one of the top 15 community foundations in the United States, with approximately $1.8 billion in assets and more than $235 million deployed annually. We work with donors, nonprofits, civic leaders, and partners across the region to connect generosity with community needs and opportunities. We help people put their giving behind what matters most while strengthening Greater Atlanta for generations to come.

Learn more at cfgreateratlanta.org.

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