



# Center for Public and Nonprofit Management

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION | COLLEGE OF COMMUNITY INNOVATION AND EDUCATION



## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Maritza Concha, Ph.D.  
CPNM Director

The mission of the Center for Public and Nonprofit Management (CPNM) is to foster research and capacity-building training through collaborations between faculty, students, and the community. As my third year concludes, I am incredibly proud of my team's accomplishments, including increasing the Center's budget to over \$1.2 million—eight times more than in 2021. We have positively impacted the public and nonprofit sectors by providing nonprofit management and cybersecurity training and educating over 300 professionals in Central Florida. Additionally, we are pioneers of the first bilingual participatory research and evaluation conference, which brought together more than 250 evaluator practitioners and academics from Latin America. In partnership with Continuing Education, we also launched the first Nonprofit Professional Program, which generates revenue for CPNM and increases opportunities for nonprofit professionals to receive post-secondary education. The CPNM team will present our projects' results at the Southeastern Conference for Public Administration (SECoPA) and the American Evaluation Association (AEA) Conference in the fall of this year.

As my time as CPNM Director ends, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve my community, students, and fellow faculty. The seeds we have planted will guide the Center's strategic planning and sustainability in the future. We will continue to grow and positively impact our community locally, nationally, and beyond.

Lastly, I welcome Dr. Andrew Sullivan as the new CPNM Director. I look forward to his vision and continued success in expanding CPNM's footprint and achieving ongoing excellence in service and research.

Charge On!

Dr. Maritza Concha  
CPNM Director

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Center for Public and Nonprofit Management improves policy and governance in partnership with communities from Central Florida and worldwide to positively and collectively impact society through research and community engagement.

### GOALS

The main two objectives for CPNM are:

- To facilitate and support sponsored research on policy and management and lead public service projects that inclusively enhance lives and strengthen communities.
- To offer unique holistic training and technical assistance to build nonprofit organizational capacity.

## Meet The Team

### Rasha Mannaa - Program Coordinator



Rasha holds two Master's Degrees from the University of Central Florida in Public Administration and Nonprofit Management and a B.S. in International Relations from Universidad del Norte in Colombia. She is a program coordinator at the Center for Public and Nonprofit Management (CPNM). She oversees the Center's initiatives, such as capacity-building seminars for nonprofits, community engagement research studies, and public sector projects. Born in the Colombian Caribbean, in a household with Lebanese and Brazilian backgrounds, her roots have a multicultural perspective, a curious spirit, and a strong commitment to promoting social inclusion.

### Jackson Brown - Program Support Specialist



Jackson Brown holds a B.S. in Nonprofit Management from the University of Central Florida. He is currently pursuing a Master's Degree also in Nonprofit Management at UCF. He works as a Program Support Specialist at the Center for Public and Nonprofit Management, where he began as an undergraduate assistant in the fall of 2021. In this role, he has played a vital part in fulfilling the versatile requirements of the Center's daily operations and initiatives. From managing capacity building seminars, evaluating programs, organizing and creating websites for conferences, creating multimedia communications, facilitating research projects, and much more, Jackson's expertise has been essential to the continued success of CPNM. He possesses an unwavering dedication and passion for the nonprofit sector and is motivated by seeing the positive impact his work has on others.

### Julia Fong- Program Coordinator



Julia holds a B.A. in Translation (English -Spanish) from the Universidad Latina de Panamá in the Republic of Panama. She has been the Program Coordinator at the Center for Public and Nonprofit Management since March 2023. In this position, she coordinates the behind-the-scenes logistics and administrative processes for the Center's initiatives, such as capacity-building seminars, conferences, the certified nonprofit professional program, and social media. Before joining UCF, Julia worked as the Experiential Learning and Education Coordinator at the U.S. Embassy in Panama City, working closely with nonprofits and local government institutions by managing State Department educational programs and federal grants.

### Graduate and undergraduate students 2021-2024

The success of CPNM initiatives is also a result of our students' support and contributions. We would like to acknowledge the following students for their involvement with CPNM:

Shannon Sokolowski, Stephanie Aguguo-Orelus, Andrea Ortega, Ketty Dones, Mahdy Abdul Kareem, Mohammad Newaz Sharif, Christopher Bellingham, Amy Krigsman, Itunu Ilesanmi, Ruth Kessa, Jocelyn Daniels, Michael Johnsen, Aldair Hernandez, Catalina Esguerra, Nicole Perez Aponte and Jessica Hoffman.

Interns: Adrian Alguera, Sherly Parra, Melissa Zahira Ospina, and Edelmery Rosario.

# CPNM in Numbers: Remarks from 2021-2024

## Nonprofit Capacity Building Initiatives

- 250 nonprofit professionals completed the seminars.
- 15 graduate students were hired.
- 2,385 hours of technical assistance were provided.
- 19 students enrolled in the nonprofit professional program certificate (NPP) between 2022-2024.
- At least 10 nonprofit organizations that participated in capacity-building programs received grants.

## Community Engaged Research Initiatives

- More than 21,000 people were reached in the sexual assault and domestic violence prevention campaign.
- 55 UCF students played CHOICES, a serious board game that raises awareness of potential sexual abuse situations and sparks discussion.
- 52 Hispanics participated in Entérate group discussions about domestic violence scenarios and encouragement to seek help.
- At least 35 farm workers participated in four focus groups to address renters' needs after a hurricane, targeting low-income Hispanics in rural areas.

## Public Sector Initiatives

- Coordinated at least 8 meetings with the Volusia League of Cities.
- At least 1,000 public service officials are expected to participate in the Cybersecurity training throughout Central Florida. The cities of Ocoee, Lakeland, Ormond Beach, DeBary, Deltona, Orange City, DeLand, and Daytona, among others, will be trained.

## Academic Conferences and Presentations

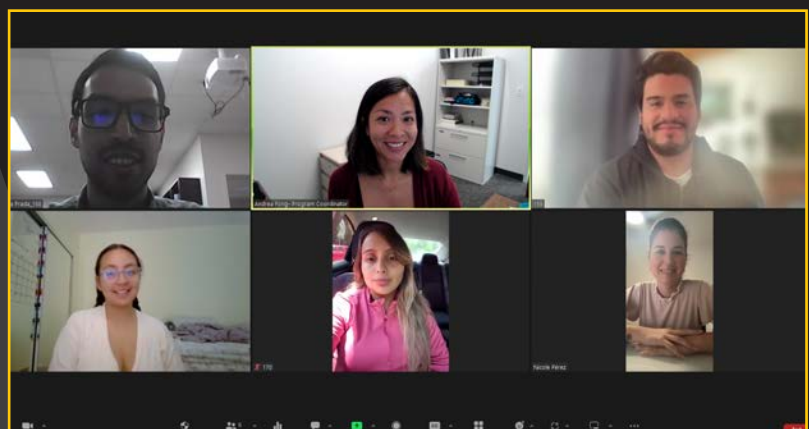
- Public Administration Research Conference (PARC) has had over 310 attendees at the conferences, with more than 50 sessions, including student presentations.
- Participatory Action and Research Evaluation Conference (PAREC) had over 250 participants and 9 presentations.
- 6 Eminent scholar series were facilitated and included both national and international academic scholars.



Domestic Violence Impact in the Hispanic Community



Enterate: You Have Choices Social Media Campaign Post



Charlas Intervention Session for Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention

# Capacity Building Initiatives

A significant milestone this year was the introduction of virtual badges for all our Capacity-Building programs alongside traditional certificates for program completion. This innovation allows organizational leaders to display their achievements not only in physical form but also on social media and professional virtual profiles, enhancing their recognition and credibility.

This initiative had sessions led by SPA faculty members Dr. Daniel Stephens, Dr. Angela White-Jones, Dr. Andrew Sullivan, Dr. Maritza Concha, and Dr. Terry Henley for the Financial Management Training.

## Osceola County Capacity Building Seminar

During its second annual 8-week Capacity Building Training in Osceola County from April 5th to May 31st, 2024, CPNM admitted 21 organizations out of 97 applications, with 20 organizations successfully completing the training. The program, conducted in a hybrid format, included in-person sessions at the UCF Business Incubator in Kissimmee, FL. Technical support for the program was provided by 4 UCF graduate students. The classes imparted practical skills to participants, enabling them to efficiently obtain resources, manage nonprofit operations, and enhance board governance. Participants expressed gratitude for the transformative impact of these teachings, quoting, *“Individual coaching sessions with TAs showed sincere investment in participants’ learning and growth,”* and *“Classes taught us how to obtain the resources to make things better, manage the nonprofit more effectively, and those on the board.”*

## Orange County Capacity Building Seminar

For 10 consecutive years, CPNM has conducted the Orange County Capacity Building program, achieving a decade of strengthening local nonprofits. This milestone demonstrates our center’s commitment to providing essential training to nonprofit organizations. A total of 41 individuals representing 21 nonprofit organizations were part of the 2024 cohort from June 7th to July 26th. We received 89 applications for 20 spots, highlighting the demand for this highly sought-after program. One-on-one technical assistance tailored to each organization’s needs was provided by master’s and Ph.D. students. The average attendance rate across all sessions was 97%, showcasing the participating organizations’ commitment to building capacity and recognizing the value of training in fulfilling its missions. One participant reflected on the program by saying: *“My experience was amazing! For me, the learning was targeted, structured, and supportive in a learning setting with sessions, books, and TA support. I felt empowered walking away because I have tools, networking community, and resources.”*

## Financial Management Training

CPNM conducted the second edition of the Financial Management training program for nonprofit professionals funded by the Orange County Citizens’ Commission for Children. This program aims to enhance the financial management skills of participating organizations, help them better compete for awards, competently administer the financial awards entrusted to them, and be audit-ready upon completion of sponsored award requirements. The program occurred from May 30th to July 18th, 2024, and was successfully completed by 30 individuals representing 15 nonprofit organizations.

There is an increasing demand for this program, as 78 applications were received with only 15 slots available. This experience was tremendously valuable to the participants, as evidenced by the comments received in the final program evaluation survey. One of the participants shared *“The seminar has been incredibly helpful, and we gained even more than we expected. It has provided very practical guidance that we are putting into action immediately.”* Survey results found that 100% of participants would recommend the course to other nonprofit leaders.

## Nonprofit Professional Program Certificate Bringing Nonprofit Professionals to the Next Level!

The NPP Certificate with Continuing Education continues to attract more students. 11 new students registered between 2023 and 2024. The primary target audience for the NPP certificate is students and emerging and established nonprofit professionals. The program is 100% online, self-paced, and open to local and international professionals. The NPP enhances professional development and increases organizational performance and sustainability. CPNM’s program coordinator, Julia.Fong@ucf.edu, oversees the NPP and the overall coordination of funded programs.

To learn more about the NPP, please visit [Nonprofit Professional Program - Online Certification | UCF Continuing Education](#)





## Other programs

### HUD Disaster Recovery Outcome of Renter Households

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development project is a study that aims to engage renters and property owners who have firsthand experience with hurricanes in Florida. CPNM has focused its efforts on Hispanic, low-income, and farmworker renters to help understand the specific needs and challenges they have faced due to these events. This research aims to collaboratively develop effective intervention strategies that support the successful recovery of renters whose homes have been damaged or destroyed. This joint initiative involves CPNM, UF Shimberg Center, and the Florida Housing Coalition. CPNM has established a community advisory board comprised of 4 dedicated members who have been trained over the past 6 months to help facilitate focus groups. To date, CPNM has conducted 4 focus groups in different cities of Apopka, Immokalee, and Myakka, engaging 38 participants; this project will continue until 2025.

### FIU Cybersecurity Training

The Cybersecurity Leadership and Strategy Professional Education Program equips elected officials and municipal and state leaders with critical cybersecurity policy, strategy, and response skills. Aligned with the 2022 Local Government Cybersecurity Act, Florida Statute Section 282.3185, this program utilizes the NIST Cybersecurity Framework as a foundational module benchmark, ensuring adherence to best practices. The training is tailored to accommodate diverse leadership levels within local governments, and the program features experiential exercises and simulations. This initiative, conducted in collaboration with Florida International University, is spearheaded by CPNM to bring these essential trainings to municipalities across Central Florida. It is projected to train over 1,000 government officials in the coming months, reinforcing local government cybersecurity resilience and preparedness. This project will continue until May 2025.

### The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP)

CPNM has hosted 3 sessions under the auspices of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program, reaching 46 international professionals. These sessions were facilitated mainly by graduate students, and CPNM Director Dr. Concha accompanied others.

- June 7th, 2024 - IVLP: Empowering the LGBTQI+ Community in Pakistan - 9 participants. Facilitator: Rasha Mannaa
- November 30th, 2023 - IVLP: Youth and Civic Engagement in Africa - 23 participants.

Facilitators: Andrea Ortega and Rasha Mannaa

- June 22, 2023- IVLP Human and Civil Rights Advocacy for Marginalized Communities in the Indo-Pacific and Central Asia - 14 participants

Facilitators: Rasha Mannaa and Dr. Maritza Concha.

### Students' Testimonies about their Participation at CPNM

"Being able to bridge scholars and practitioners in a safe space is the most rewarding aspect of the Capacity Building program. Textbooks can't always teach the hustle it takes to run a nonprofit and a space like the one we are able to create is important for nonprofit leaders".

*Andrea Ortega*

"It has expanded my knowledge of the variety of nonprofit organizations (varying sizes, stages of organizational development, and missions). I have enhanced my skills in teaching and mentoring. I learned skills that could assist me if I should undertake future consulting efforts in a professional capacity".

*Shannon Sokolowski*

"Serving as a TA has been instrumental in my personal life and professional growth, bridging between academic knowledge and practical application. My background in international development and humanitarian work has helped me support queries and provide better resources to the nonprofits working in Orange County, while their enthusiasm for learning and contributing to society has been inspiring. Additionally, it strengthened my leadership and communication skills, preparing me for future roles in academia and public service".

*Mohammed Newaz*

## Grants

### Amount funded: \$205,803

#### Orange County

Capacity Building Seminar Series

PI: Maritza Concha, Ph.D.;

Orange Citizens' Commission for Children (Multiple year contract; Renewal of contracts shall be subject to appropriation of funds by the Orange County Board of County Commissioners)

### Amount funded: \$526,230

#### Orange County

Financial Management Series

PI: Maritza Concha, Ph.D.

Orange Citizens' Commission for Children (Multiple year contract; Renewal of contracts shall be subject to appropriation of funds by the Orange County Board of County Commissioners)

### Amount funded: \$133,000

#### Osceola County

Capacity Building Seminar Series

PI: Maritza Concha, Ph.D.;

Osceola County Board of County Commissioners

### Amount funded: \$112,336

HUD Rental Outcomes - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

PI: Christopher Emrich, Ph.D.

Co-PI: Maritza Concha, Ph.D.

## New grants

### Amount funded: \$183,757

#### Multiple Central Florida Counties

Cybersecurity training for public servants

PI: Maritza Concha, Ph.D.

Florida International University

### Amount funded: \$600,000

Orange County (under negotiation)

Technical Assistance Capacity Building Program

PI: Maritza Concha, Ph.D.

Orange Citizens' Commission for Children (Multiple year contract; Renewal of contracts shall be subject to appropriation of funds by the Orange County Board of County Commissioners)





**Orange County General Capacity Building Seminar 2024**



**East Coast Migrant Head Start Project  
HUD Renters Study**



**Orange County Financial Management Training 2024**



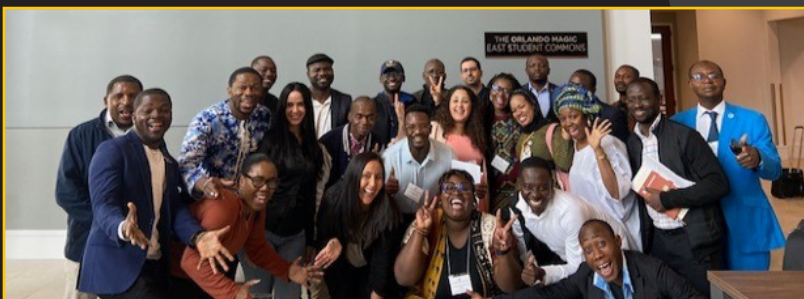
**Arnova Conference 2023**



**Osceola County Capacity Building Seminar 2024**



**Public Administration Research Conference 2024**



**International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) 2024**



**CPNM Staff  
Orange County Capacity Building  
Closing Ceremony 2024**

## Announcements – 2025



### CPNM New Director 2024-2027

Andrew Sullivan, Ph.D.  
Incoming CPNM director

#### Vision

I'm excited to start as the director for the Center for Public and Nonprofit Management. My vision for the center is to expand our partnerships with local, national, and international nonprofit and public organizations to build on our internationally recognized research and develop research-practice partnerships to solve social problems.

We plan to connect our community partners to our students and faculty through service-learning opportunities, theses and dissertations, alternative spring breaks with UCF Downtown, and developing problem-focused research questions our students can tackle.

We also plan to launch a research highlights series, spotlighting our students' and faculty's research through takeaways for practice. Beginning with the Collaborative for Homelessness Action, Research, and Transformation ([charthomeless.org](http://charthomeless.org)), we will ensure research responds to the needs of vulnerable populations and provide evidence for action while maintaining our renown for high-quality academic research. Through this collaboration, we will transform systems to help address these social problems.

Last, we will continue our international partnerships, including Latin America and East and South Asia, through conferences, speakers, research, and study abroad opportunities.

I look forward to starting this journey and continue building the Center's success.

Andrew Sullivan, Ph.D.  
Incoming CPNM director

#### Announcements

2025 Open Applications for Capacity Building Seminars:

- **March** - For Osceola County nonprofits
- **April** - For Orange County nonprofits
- **May** - For Orange County nonprofits / Financial Management Training

Open applications will be shared via email and posted on the Facebook page: UCF Center for Public and Nonprofit Management. For more information send us an email at [cpnm@ucf.edu](mailto:cpnm@ucf.edu)

- **2024 - 2025** Open spots to have UCF and FIU host a NO-COST mandatory Compliance Cybersecurity Training for State and Local Government Employees in any Central Florida city, crafted for public-sector senior leaders and officials with non-technical responsibilities. For more information, please send us an email at [rasha@ucf.edu](mailto:rasha@ucf.edu)

## Conferences and academic presentations

### Public Administration Research Conference (PARC) 2024

PARC 2024 gathered 120 participants and had approximately 15 sessions in a one-day conference. This year's attendance increased by 37.65% from 2023. PARC 2024 had Dick Batchelor as a guest speaker.

SAVE *the* DATE

PARC 2025 will  
take place on

Wednesday, February 5th, 2025

#### Other remarks

- CPNM participated in ARNOVA 2023 with a booth in the Exhibit Hall and delivered a panel on "Capacity building seminar as a service-learning experience."
- CPNM supported the Nonprofit Partners Conference, coordinated by the Nonprofit Advisory Board.

#### Upcoming participation in conferences

- The Southeastern Conference for Public Administration (SECoPA) to be held in September 2024 in Memphis, Tennessee.
  - Panel: "Capacity Building Seminar as a Service-Learning Experience."
- The American Evaluation Association Conference (AEA) to be held in October 2024 in Portland, Oregon.
  - Roundtable discussion: "Evaluation of a Nonprofit Capacity Building Program."
  - Poster: "The Use of Ethical Standards and Sensitive Approaches in the Evaluation of a Sexual Assault Prevention Intervention."

### CONTACT US / SOCIAL MEDIA

Center for Public and Nonprofit Management

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