

As a non-traditional service provider, the Barbara Stone Foundation provides for, improves, and strengthens the Greenville community, through our work with individuals with disabilities, without relying on ongoing state, federal, government, or agency funding (such as from DDSN).

By decreasing dependence on this type of support, we free up resources for other larger scale organizations working with individuals who may be unable to live independently, who require higher levels of day to day care, or simply don't fit with traditional employment services (like Vocational Rehab). Additionally, unrestricted funding allows us to provide high quality, individualized and creative solutions to issues facing the disability community without being limited by the restrictions that often come with working as an agency funded organization - another barrier to opportunities and services for people with disabilities - specifically but not limited to the areas of accessibility, employment, health care and transportation.

According to the 2019 census, individuals with disabilities make-up 13% of Greenville County's population, 23.2% of those 67,000 people are reported to be living in poverty, and only 38% of people with disabilities, ages 18-34 are employed, as compared to 76% of people without a disability. These numbers continue to grow and the needs of the disability community continue to evolve.

In 1968, the late Barbara Stone, a true visionary in the Greenville community established many of the disability services we have here today. She called on the community (local business leaders, government officials, other parents of children with disabilities) to think outside the box and do better for an underserved portion of our community. Today, people with disabilities represent one of the most diverse subsets of the population, and they continue to be largely underserved and underemployed. We can do better.

The Barbara Stone Foundation dismantles barriers, creates innovative initiatives and supports other disability organization while decreasing stress on the "system." We work closely with individuals, their families, and other relevant stakeholders to understand the critical needs of our community on a smaller scale, understanding that serving the disability community is not a "one size fits all."

This request supports several efforts of the Barbara Stone Foundation which benefit the community.

- The expansion of services to include the tri-county region, using our established initiative, Greenville CAN, as an effective model of collaboration, therefore increasing our access to additional resources, growing our fundraising efforts, increasing our grant giving capacity, and establishing projects that meet the needs of the disability community specific to Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties.
- The expansion of the UP Employment Initiative, an existing workforce development initiative through which we recruit, vet, prepare, and refer work ready individuals with disabilities to work in the hospitality industry in Greenville – diversifying and strengthening the workforce of our community, increasing independence of people with disabilities (again, less taxing on the system), and addressing labor shortage issues.