

Shannon MB Dixon had an eclectic career in the non-profit sector prior to starting her own consulting business, which focuses on building organizational capacity in a collaborative fashion. She was first introduced to community-based work as an AmeriCorps VISTA working for a community development corporation in Memphis, TN, just south of Downtown. That experience grew through subsequent positions, most notably as a program officer at the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis and as a project manager for the UrbanArt Commission, a non-profit that facilitates public art throughout Memphis neighborhoods. Along the way she also worked with arts organizations and voluntary disaster relief agencies. Beginning her consulting business in 2005, Shannon works with a variety of clients ranging from city departments, established non-profits, start-up organizations, foundations, universities, and non-profit coalitions. Rather than working within defined models, which she finds restrictive, Shannon uses strategic and collaborative processes and critical thinking to serve her clients best. Shannon holds a Masters degree in City and Regional Planning. She lives in Memphis, TN with her husband, son, and two rescued dogs.

Experience and Skills

Non-profit revenue generation

- Developed grant proposals, grant compliance reports, maintained relationships with funders, and put grant tracking/compliance systems into place
- Researched and identified new funding sources
- Worked on a consulting team with community leaders to form recommendations and implementation steps for development of a foundation to support a higher education institution
- Wrote and secured grants from local and national foundations, corporations, and government
- Developed case statements for use in individual giving conversations

Strategic planning

- Developed planning processes and implemented these processes resulting in 3 to 5-year organizational plans by working with the clients and tailored teams of consultants or solo
- Worked with staff and boards to plan operations for non-profits and governmental agencies, including plans for collaborative inter-governmental work groups

Facilitation of group decision-making

- Facilitated committees and work groups made up of various stakeholders (public and private) through concepts to final consensus

- Facilitated groups of architects, artists, non-profit leaders, engineers and community stakeholders for various projects
- Facilitated funding committees to make funding decisions
- Facilitated strategic planning sessions, focus groups, and public meetings

Working with Community

- Worked with various organizations to plan for effective use of volunteers
- Worked with numerous community organizations towards project development and effective organizational development
- Collaborated with neighborhood residents to develop existing conditions studies, neighborhood plans, and to implement neighborhood plans
- Led focus groups of various community groups for feedback to community institutions and funders

Board Development

- Led community-based boards to develop and maintain sound board development procedures
- Assessed and suggested improvements to boards of directors for long-standing and emerging non-profit organizations
- Developed boards of directors, from recruiting board members to developing policies, with programs that were transitioning to stand alone non-profits

Peer networking and learning

- Facilitated the founding and development of a disaster response coordination group for approximately 30 agencies
- Developed member services concepts and implementation for member website for a national peer network group of grassroots funders
- Developed and implemented learning convenings/conferences for organizations across North America with like-minded purposes, which lean heavily on *in-community* and peer-to-peer learning

Organizational and Project Development

- Developed projects in teams, which included researching of best practices, developing concept papers, developing program partnerships, securing funding, hiring staff, and complying with grants
- Launched programs and/or concepts into stand alone 501c(3) or (4) organizations through development of IRS and other charitable status applications, development of a board of directors, recruitment and hiring of executive director, development of human resource materials, and development of other planning documents necessary for transition
- Coached executive directors through various organizational development processes

Research

- Researched issues including community schools, neighborhood planning, land use controls, retail trends, general land use planning, neighborhood funding initiatives, code enforcement, after-school programs, preparations for college programs, museum structures, etc.

Past and Present Clients

- Le Bonheur Community Health and Well Being
- LifeLine to Success
- Page Robbins Adult Day Center
- Hyde Family Foundations
- ArtsBuild (Chattanooga)
- Mid-South Food Bank
- HopeWorks
- Playback Memphis
- BRIDGES, USA
- Central US Earthquake Consortium
- LifeLine to Success
- St. Mary's Episcopal Church
- Page Robbins Adult Day Center
- TN Data Commons
- Orton Family Foundation
- Opera Memphis
- Association Montessori Internationale Elementary Alumni Association
- Healthy Neighborhoods Greenwood Neighborhoods
- Grassroots Grantmakers (National Organization)
- GrowMemphis
- Healthy Memphis Common Table
- University of Memphis, Regional Economic Development Center
- Community Foundation for Greater Memphis
- Downtown Memphis Commission
- Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
- Project Green Fork
- Memphis Regional Chamber of Commerce
- The Salvation Army
- New Ballet Ensemble
- Center for Community Building & Neighborhood Action
- Paulist Fathers
- Memphis Second Chance Foundation
- St. George's Independent School

- Literacy Mid South
- Maria Montessori School
- Hope House
- Planned Parenthood Greater Memphis
- Vollintine Evergreen Community Association
- Midtown Memphis Development Corporation
- Planned Parenthood Greater Memphis Region
- Shelby County Books from Birth
- Game Day Healthy Kids Foundation
- Girls, Inc.
- Community Development Council of Greater Memphis
- Wolf River Conservancy
- Community Alliance for the Homeless
- Gaskill Strategies
- Consilience Group:
 - City of Memphis, Housing and Community Development
 - Storm Water Maintenance for City of Memphis and Shelby County
 - Memphis and Shelby County Code Enforcement strategic plan
 - Downtown Memphis Commission strategic plan
 - Our Lady of Perpetual Help strategic plan
 - Mid-South AIDS Fund (funded by Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, United Way of Greater Memphis)
 - Family Services (funded by Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, United Way of Greater Memphis)
 - Local Community Development Corporation study and recommendations, for the Assisi Foundation
 - Memphis Front Porch
 - City of Memphis, Joint Capital Planning and Services
 - Human Services Policy Center (Seattle, Washington)
 - Memphis Tomorrow
 - LeMoyne Owen College
 - Family Safety Center
 - Housing Trust Fund
 - Catholic Diocese of Memphis opportunities assessment
 - Children’s Hospital and Health System (of Wisconsin), Community Services Division change management
 - Church of the Incarnation Catholic School
 - Friends For Life

Employment History

- Consultant, sole-proprietor, 2005-present
- Director of Grant Development, Greater Memphis Arts Council, 2004-2005
- Disaster Preparedness Coordinator, Volunteer Memphis, 2002-2004
- Project Manager, UrbanArt Commission, 2000-2001
- Program Officer, Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, 1998-2000
- Research Assistant, University of Memphis Regional Economic Development Center, 1996-1998

Education

- MA, City and Regional Planning, University of Memphis, 1997
- BA, Sociology, University of Memphis, 1993

Affiliations

- Livable Memphis Steering Committee, 2010-present
- Leadership Academy Advisory Committee, 2008-2010
- Lantana Projects, Founding Board Member, 2004-2006
- Delta Axis, Board Member, 2001-2004
- United Way of the Mid-South Venture Fund, Committee Member, 2000-2010
- Cooper Young Development Corporation, Board Member, 2000-2005
- UrbanArt Commission, Board Member, 1998-2000

Training/Recognition

- Leadership Academy, 2008 Fellow
- Carson Greil Group: Appreciative Inquiry
- BoardSource: Non Profit Board Governance Course
- Various facilitation courses; various community development and arts conferences
- American Institute of Certified Planners Planning Student Award, 1997

References

- Melissa Wolowicz, Vice President of Development, BRIDGES
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- Janis Foster Richardson, Former Executive Director, Grassroots Grantmakers
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