



Today's Grant Funding Challenges for Small Nonprofits and How ESC Can Help

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By Chris Van Curan, Senior ESC Consultant

You no doubt have heard of The Winnepesaukee Playhouse, Manchester Young Professionals Network, Rochester Opera House, Greater Salem Caregivers, Women's Business Center, and Odyssey House. What do they all have in common besides being a northern New England nonprofit? Two things. For one, they received a grant to fund a needed project. And second, they engaged the Executive Service Corp. (ESC) to do the project for them and got some professional help with the grant application for funding that project.

According to Dick O'Shaughnessy, Executive Director of Greater Salem Care Givers, "ESC was very helpful in reviewing our grant request to New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. The recommendations ESC made will be instrumental in helping Caregivers to remain solvent and continue to be a vital contributing entity in the Greater Salem Community for many years to come."

Over 25% of ESC's consulting projects are grant funded and most have had some help from the ESC in preparing the successful grant application. The remaining projects were either funded by "angel" donors or from operating funds.

Nonprofit organizations in Northern New England are facing some daunting fund raising challenges in today's dire economy and those challenges will probably last into next year or longer - especially for small nonprofit organizations.

Grant funding is difficult to obtain. The number of grants is limited. The application process is complex and tedious as well as sometimes political. The funding criteria for grant funding can move from year to year as shifting focus and objectives change within the management of the grant. There is a certain professional skill needed in preparing a grant application. Most small nonprofits do not have it and cannot afford to hire it.

That is where the Executive Service Corps has played a role. In 2004, a small group of New Hampshire and Maine retirees formed a nonprofit organization to provide consulting services to other nonprofits in their states. Most of them came from the "for profit" world, had managerial and organizational skills, had served on nonprofit boards, and had time to "give back" to their communities. Michael Daily, with an MBA from Harvard and a career in the furniture business, was one of the organizers. Michael is the Executive Director of the Executive Service Corps, which manages multiple



Executive Service Corps
Strengthening the nonprofit community

nonprofit projects in the three Northern New England states. He also manages a cadre of 28 trained nonprofit consultants with diverse talents, who volunteer their time to work on nonprofit projects, for which ESC charges a small fee to cover overhead expenses. Their projects range from board development, strategic planning, revenue generation, fundraising, business plans and feasibility studies, and coaching. And, ESC can help with the grant funding application process.

You can learn more from the ESC website: www.nonprofit-consultants.org or contact Michael Daily at (603) 362-9300, (207) 641-2300, or michael@nonprofit-consultants.org