



PROFESSIONAL AFFORDABLE CONSULTING FOR NONPROFITS

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919-681-3536
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ESC Strategic Planning Process Delivers A Roadmap for the Future for Meals on Wheels (Wake)

The mission of Meals on Wheels of Wake County is to provide either a hot, nutritious meal and a short social visit to homebound senior adults and people with disabilities, or a hot, nutritious meal and activities in a dining room. We enable people to eat better, feel safer in their homes, and live independently longer.

Meals on Wheels of Wake County has delivered more than 6.5 million meals since 1974. More than 150 volunteers help deliver the meal at lunch Monday through Friday. The meals are paid for through public funding and private donations, including voluntary contributions made by the participants.

As the population grows in Wake County and as more people grow older, Meals on Wheels of Wake County anticipates an increasing demand for its services. With public funding sources remaining stagnant or being cut, the agency must raise more and more donations to sustain and grow the program.

ESC has helped Meals on Wheels of Wake County prepare for the future in two important ways. First, Meals on Wheels consulted with ESC to develop a Strategic Plan. The neutral outside facilitators from ESC were of great benefit as they were able to pull into the discussion all of the different constituencies: Board members, staff, volunteers, participants and funders. By examining where Meals on Wheels is and where the agency needs to go, we devised some very concrete (and realistic) goals for the future. Second, other ESC consultants helped facilitate staff training. As Meals on Wheels serves more people, staff members have additional work. ESC professional development gave us the chance to become better employees and to work together as a team.

At Meals on Wheels of Wake County, the Strategic Plan is now the framework that we use to discuss decisions. It is a roadmap of where we want to go and helps us to know what the important goals as well as the benchmarks are. I realized that the money Meals on Wheels spent hiring ESC consultants was money well spent at a recent Board of Directors meeting. When we were discussing a proposed budget for the new fiscal year, one Board member spoke up and wanted to know if

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both our projected revenues and expenses were on target with what we had set down in the Strategic Plan. He wanted to know if we were committed to following the roadmap that we had agreed on. Hiring ESC was a good investment for our agency. We received superior services without taking away huge sums of money from the mission. I wholeheartedly would recommend ESC to other non-profit agencies. –**Alan Winstead, Executive Director, Meals on Wheels, Wake**

GRANTS GALORE AVAILABLE NOW FOR CONSULTING SCHOLARSHIPS!

This year finds us fortunate yet again to be the recipient of grants and donations. We wish to express our sincere thanks to those who have so generously sent donations which help us provide scholarships to nonprofit organizations who cannot afford even the modest fees for ESC professional consulting. We also wish to thank the following Foundations who have graciously donated to ESC. These funds will allow ESC to assist those who assist others, therefore helping a multitude of Triangle residents.

Triangle Community Foundation – \$10,000
The Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation - \$5000
Mary Duke Biddle - \$3000

Aubrey Fletcher: A ‘Driving Force’ in ESC History

After traveling the world as a senior executive for a New York-based international business, Aubrey Fletcher retired to Durham, North Carolina. He became involved in a number of nonprofit organizations, one of which was the Carolina Health Advisory Group (CHAG). CHAG, which enlisted retired businessmen to advise small hospitals, eventually dissolved as larger hospital systems replaced its client base. As CHAG folded, Fletcher and Bill Werner, another CHAG consultant, saw the need for a similar group to serve the nonprofit community.

“Bill and I decided that we had a group of executives who wanted to help nonprofits, and perhaps we could make use of that,” says Fletcher. In 1987, Fletcher, joined by Werner and two other former CHAG consultants, decided to organize a new group, the Executive Service Corps of the Carolinas (ESC). They joined an already-established network of ESCs operating around the country and set out to recruit their first funders, consultants, and clients. One of those early consultants was Perry Colwell, who Fletcher describes as a mainstay of the still emerging ESC “contributing a great deal to the initial activity” of the organization.

“Aubrey was the driving force that created ESC,” says Colwell. “He did everything: found clients, assigned consultants, did a lot of consulting, did our public relations, and raised funds. He also served as President, Board Chair and was the leader of ESC in every way.”

Once ESC became a registered nonprofit in 1987, Fletcher set out to find funding for the new organization. Unfortunately, the Duke Endowment grant that funded

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CHAG could not be applied to ESC because it was reserved for advising hospitals. After a very convincing campaign by Fletcher, Duke agreed to change the provisions of the grant, making it possible for ESC to use the remaining grant money intended for CHAG. To this day, ESC is thankful to receive the gift of free office space through the Duke School of Medicine, a huge benefit of the relationship which Aubrey cemented.

As the ESC name and business grew, ESC was also able to charge its clients minimal fees. After two or three years, the revenue from these fees was enough to pay the overhead costs, and Fletcher says he was “ready to dance a jig.”

Marketing ESC to the community also presented a challenge for Fletcher. He and Werner started from square one, networking through churches and groups like Kiwanis. “Nobody had ever heard of us in North Carolina. We didn’t have any credibility or standing. They didn’t think of us unfavorably, but the general question was, ‘Who are you and how do we know you’re any good?’” he recounts.

Little by little, ESC began to build a small client base, as Fletcher traveled all over the Triangle searching for nonprofits in need and doing informal presentations to even the smallest of groups. The organization’s reputation spread thanks to his diligence and the fact that early clients were so pleased with the quality of ESC service. Fletcher remained with ESC for five years, watching it grow toward what it is today. He recalls how much he learned from this exposure to the nonprofit community.

“I was a business executive all my life. I had no idea what went on, or even that there was a nonprofit community. When I started ESC, it was quite an education and a revelation for me to realize how many wonderful people were willing to devote their time and effort to help their communities.”

Twenty-three years and two name changes later, the Executive Service Corps of the Greater Triangle has served hundreds of organizations and presently boasts nearly 40 consultants. As he humbly expresses his excitement for what ESC is today, it remains clear that none of this would have been possible without the dedication and leadership of Aubrey Fletcher. He was truly a “driving force” in making ESC of the Greater Triangle the success it is today.

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