

Select Group of Leaders Share Their Experience

**Members can increase
capabilities with guidance
from pool of consultants**

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After informally providing members access to experienced nonprofit human services consultants for some time, the Alliance for Children and Families has grouped this cadre of experienced and proven-effective consultants into the Alliance Executive Consultant Select Group, yet another value-added tool for Alliance members.

“The Executive Consultant Select Group represents the evolution and growth of something we’ve been doing informally for years,” says Susan Dreyfus, senior vice president and COO for the Alliance. “The service has become so successful we decided to create a program to provide structure for it. The program ensures that members continue to enjoy full access to timely information and knowledge, tools and solutions through the Alliance,” Dreyfus adds.

In addition to the expertise of Alliance staff and the resources of the Severson National Information Center, members

will have facilitated access to a team of approved consultants who are thoroughly experienced with the nonprofit sector and who have agreed to work with the Alliance to provide discounted fees to its members.

Benefits & Value

According to Undraye Howard, director of consultation and leadership services for the Alliance, there are benefits of the program both for members and for consultants seeking to serve the nonprofit sector. Howard is a former Alliance member CEO who joined the Alliance to direct this and related programs.

Howard describes the “flywheel effect” he hopes to generate through the Executive Consultant Select Group. “Once a member agency contacts us seeking information, guidance, or advice, we connect them with our internal resources—our own specialized intellectual capital—including educational opportunities, information available through the Severson Center, our research department, the various communities of practice, and other internal resources.”

The Select Group introduces a new tier of intellectual capital because it will connect members with experienced consultants more conveniently than if they had to search on their own. These consultants will increase members’ capabilities, like a mechanical flywheel, by enabling them to perform functions beyond their own internal capacity. Members will also enjoy discounts for services provided by Select Group consultants, and can feel assured that those consultants have been thoroughly vetted for quality and expertise.

Consultants who join the program will enjoy benefits as well. The Select Group will become the “go to” providers for Alliance members. Members seeking consulting services will often find Select Group participants to be their first choice.

Process in Place

Prospective consultants will most often come to the attention of Alliance leadership through referrals or personal experience. Howard and his team then research the consultants and confer with other Alliance senior executives. The consultant is contacted, information and questions are exchanged, and the person receives an application package.

Exclusive Access to Free Information

A main benefit of Alliance membership is the ability to obtain informational resources.

The Executive Consultant Select Group is the newest example of the benefits of Alliance membership. The Severson National Information Center, the extensive library available to all members, has been a source of information for many years.

Just a few of the resources available through the Severson Center include:

- Online topical bibliographies on frequently requested subjects, such as organizational and board governance, best practices, evidence-based programs, and mergers.
- Collection of policies, procedures, and programs from member agencies.
- Access to the members-only online database Docushare, which includes documents on scores of topics.

The Severson Center also provides up-to-the-minute advice from peers with Alliance-sponsored online discussion groups and Communities of Practice for professional staff to facilitate the sharing of information and ideas in allied disciplines.

Go to the Alliance Web site, www.alliance1.org for more information.

Contact the Severson Center directly at (800) 221-3726, ext. 3615 or severson@alliance1.org for more information.

Areas of Expertise

The Select Group can connect Alliance members to resources in all of the following topical areas, as well as many others limited only by members' needs and consultants' capabilities:

- ◆ strategic planning;
- ◆ transition and succession planning;
- ◆ mergers and acquisitions;
- ◆ board development and governance;
- ◆ executive coaching;
- ◆ leadership training and personnel development;
- ◆ talent retention;
- ◆ human resource issues or concerns;
- ◆ resource development, including capital campaigns;
- ◆ budgets and finance;
- ◆ creative financing for nonprofits and grant development;
- ◆ marketing and communications;
- ◆ technology support;
- ◆ advocacy and public policy;
- ◆ ensuring client privacy programs are effective and appropriate;
- ◆ quality control and assessment; and
- ◆ other operational and strategic issues.

"Through the Executive Consultant Select Group, the Alliance can empower every member organization in meeting the challenges of today and tomorrow," concludes Howard. ■

Once program leadership have received the completed application, they conduct a thorough due diligence assessment: contacting references, analyzing experience, and examining service offerings. If the new consultant is accepted, he or she is introduced to Alliance membership via the Alliance Web site, the *Alliance E-News*, and other avenues. Alliance staff will also begin scheduling topical teleconferences or webinars so that Alliance members can begin benefiting from the consultant's expertise.

When a member calls the Alliance seeking a referral for a consultant and shares the details of their need, Howard will then consider appropriate consultants and create a match. The member and consultant can finalize details on their own.

Throughout a project, Howard and his team play a pivotal role, keeping in touch with both parties to ensure the project is proceeding as desired, that everyone is satisfied and fully served, identifying any issues that might arise, and keeping the project on track. Later, Howard follows up with both sides and conducts a thorough evaluation of the project, its success, degree of mutual satisfaction, and lessons learned.

To learn more, contact Undraye Howard at (414) 359-1040, ext. 3618 or uhoward@alliance1.org.

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