

**B**uilding  
**E**xcellence  
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## A Capacity Building Project Serving Genesee County Nonprofits

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### FAQ: Consultants

#### *What is the BEST Consultant Roster?*

The BEST Consultant Roster includes more than seventy consultants whose resumes and references have been screened and who have participated in a BEST training session and in-depth orientation. Agencies selected for the BEST Phase I Assessment or for BEST Phase II Capacity Building may choose to work with consultants from this vetted list.

#### *How does BEST recruit consultants?*

Initially, BEST sent out an RFP for consultant applicants through members of the Flint Funders Collaborative and to other funders in the State of Michigan; and posted the RFP through other medial outlets. Since 2003, additional consultants have been recruited through consultants who have worked with BEST, through recommendations from BEST nonprofit agencies, and though other associations focused on nonprofits.

#### *How does one apply to become a BEST consultant?*

Consultants may apply to BEST by going to [www.bestprojectonline.org](http://www.bestprojectonline.org) and completing the online application.

#### *How does BEST select consultants?*

BEST staff and funders look for consultants who have a history of relevant nonprofit sector experience as well as relevant skills; strong written and communication skills; an asset-based approach to working with organizations; and a consulting philosophy that seeks to build client independence, not dependence. BEST conducts a thorough reference check on all consultants admitted to the pool, and consultants must agree to participate in an orientation to BEST as well as two professional development sessions each year. Consultants must also be willing to work within the BEST fee structure and to have their work evaluated.

#### *How does BEST match consultants to agencies?*

The Director of Programs in consultation with the Lead Consultant creates a short list of recommended consultants (usually 3-4) for agencies during the Phase I Assessment. Consultants are recommended based on their skills, expertise, and fit with the organization. It is up to the nonprofit to select the consultant or consultants with whom they want to work. If the agency chooses, it can broaden this list by searching the Consultant Roster. For Phase II Capacity Building, BEST leadership recommends three consultants for each area of capacity building for which the agency applies. As with Phase I, the agency can choose from these recommendations, or select a different consultant from the BEST consultant pool. Any consultant chosen by the agency, however, must be part of the Consultant Roster. If the nonprofit wishes to work with someone who has not been vetted by BEST, the consultant is asked first to apply for membership.

#### *What is the consultant rate of pay and how was this determined?*

Over the past three years, consultants have been paid at an hourly rate of \$100 for off-site work and \$125 for work on-site. This rate was determined by averaging the rates of pay listed by consultants

during the RFP process and assessing the rate against the BEST budget. As of Fall 2006, the consultant fee schedule will increase by \$25 for both on-site and off-site work.

***What consulting services are requested?***

Consultants working during the Assessment Phase are expected to have a broad general knowledge of nonprofit agencies. During the Phase II Capacity Building, consultants with experience in board development and strategic planning; marketing and communication, fundraising, and HR tend to be more often requested during the second year. Agencies are not limited to these areas of expertise, however, or these timeframes. Contracts for capacity building depend largely on the assessment findings and are tailored to individual agency needs.

***How are consultants evaluated?***

Consultants are evaluated according to their fulfillment of the BEST requirements and their work with agencies. Work with agencies is assessed by the Lead Consultant and Director of Programs with input from agency directors. Because the assessment report is given to the agency with a promise of confidentiality, the Lead Consultant is the only one outside of the agencies board and staff and their consultant to have access to this document. This access is for quality assurance purposes only.

***How do you manage the consultant pool?***

The consulting pool is managed by the Director of Programs with assistance from the Lead Consultant. It is her job to oversee the recruitment and selection of consultants, prepare consultant contracts, coordinate orientations, and monitor workshop attendance. She is also responsible with the Lead Consultant for making recommendations to agencies and maintaining regular communication with members of the consulting pool.