

## **Nomination Form**

### **2015 Charles Stephens Award for Excellence in Diversity**

#### **AFP Mississippi Chapter**

##### Criteria

1. AFP Mississippi set out to truly embrace diversity and inclusion (D&I) in our programming so that it would not only benefit our members and expand awareness of ethical fundraising, but also the entire Mississippi mission-driven business sector. In order to do this, we joined forces with the MS Assn of Grantmakers, MS Center for Nonprofits, Volunteer Mississippi, MS Arts Commission, and MS Development Authority to offer the Positioned for Progress conference in October 2015.

In planning sessions, the partners agreed that the best way to embrace D&I in a state with a long history of not being inclusive was to begin a conversation on a broad scale. To implement our D&I conference programming, we asked the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation (WWIRR) to lead our workshops and bring in D&I partners.

We now have a hands-on opening plenary led by WWIRR and a D&I track of workshops that will be led by national and local leaders such as Jackson 2000 the Women's Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and Dr. Otis Johnson, former mayor of Savannah, GA. Topics will include The Power of Dialogue Circles, Board Diversity and Inclusion, Engaging Youth in Community Change, Measuring Success of Diversity and Inclusion, and Working with Community Partners.

By partnering with like, but very dissimilar sectors (volunteer, grantmaking, fundraising, nonprofit management, and arts), we have broadened the scope of the audience we are targeting with our fundraising messages and D&I conversations, thus being much more inclusive than we have been in the past as a chapter. By holding a single conference for all of the mission-based sectors in the state, we are leveraging resources and helping our audience judiciously use their time and money.

By bringing all of these individuals together for a single conference, we are creating a platform for conversation and bridge-building. By bringing in vendors that serve all of these sectors, we are embracing the business community that might have technology, services, equipment, or supplies that traditionally serve a single sector and allowing them to create the conversations that can lead to cross-sector application and/or dialogue. We plan to annually meet at the P4P conference where WWIRR will document conversations and shifts in conversations.

2. This method is easily replicated on a statewide level in other states by banding together the AFP chapters, nonprofit sector, volunteer sector, grantmaking sector, and government agency sector to create a single conference that serves the joint purposes of everyone. As coalitions grow, it will be easier to bring in national D&I partners to moderate or lead the conversations and make sure that they are truly inclusive and engage a diverse audience.

The first step is to invite the proposed partners leaders to a formation discussion meeting. In preparation for this meeting, each of the partners must bring a list of their current continuing education, coalition-building, inclusion, community activity, and membership programming as well as an analysis of how well their activities are meeting target audience needs. The group has a healthy discussion over a working lunch where a moderator or group leader analyzes their responses onsite. This discussion will lead to the proposed partners self-selecting in or out of the coalition. Partners who are interested return to their boards or governing leadership with a proposed plan of action and a request to formally join the coalition.

Step 2: Coalition partners meet to agree on who will act as fiscal agent for the conference, whether or not they will hire an event management firm, who will act as leaders, what sort of location best serves the needs, a draft budget, what a partnership fee will be, how the income will be split, etc.

Step 3: The fiscal agent leader creates an MOU that each coalition partner organization must sign and return with a partnership fee. (Ours was \$1500 per partner.)

Step 4: The conference leader will manage all planning meetings, sponsorship appeals, site details, partner business details (hotels, restaurants, etc.), and media.

Step 5: Regular meetings are held with action plans for the separate areas and reports of activity concluded and in play. (We had work committees who oversaw planning of each workshop track, fundraising, speaker engagement, and PR & marketing.) Each partner committee is expected to disseminate conference information in targeted messages to their constituencies to ensure maximum participation and registration. For instance, the AFP MS chapter is hosting a pre-conference session for the CFRE Prep Test and are working to disseminate that information to neighboring states.

Step 6 (Oct 19-21): Each of the committees is responsible for working with the event management group to oversee their portion of the conference. This means making sure that all A/V, food, and volunteer needs are met as well as troubleshooting issues as they arise. Fundraising committee will meet with the current sponsors and exhibition vendors to request sponsorship pledges for the following year.

Step 7 (Oct): After the conference, the partner leaders will survey their constituencies to find out how the workshops, plenaries, and sessions impacted them and whether or not the conference was a positive experience.

Step 8 (Nov): The partner leaders will meet to discuss the conference and see what can be done better next year and who we need to engage Coalition partners will be more than happy to work with other groups to implement this in their states.