



10 Tips for Successful Nonprofit Capacity Building Projects

Supporting nonprofit organizations in their ability to work effectively and efficiently is the basis of our [nonprofit capacity building funding area](#). While providing this grant funding to over 36 Wake County organizations that support children living healthy lives, we've actively listened to and learned from our grantee community. To increase the likelihood of a successful project and to minimize the bumps in the road, we share the following tips.

1. Be realistic in identifying the project goals.
2. Be realistic about the project timeline. Consider the time necessary by staff and board members for planning and implementing the project, as well as the complexity of scheduling and coordinating their calendars.
3. Recognize that staff and/or board turnover is likely. Some changes will affect the timeline more dramatically than others.
4. Allow staff the time necessary to engage in the work and recognize how the capacity building work may add to day-to-day responsibilities.
5. Engage the entire team throughout the project and keep communication channels open. People respond differently to change and support is often greater when staffs' opinion is genuinely invited and received.
6. Select a consultant whose workstyle supports the team and who has the skill set required. Work in parallel with the consultant.
7. Enlist the expertise of others. Consult with more than one expert when making a significant infrastructure change.
8. Engage legal counsel prior to formal discussions if considering a merger and/or acquisition, whether initiating or responding to an invitation.
9. Include expenses for hosting meetings.
10. Be open to opportunities presented – even when they seem like challenges at the time – they may lead to greater achievements than previously imagined.

In January of this year we released our report, [Nonprofit Capacity Building: 2014 Review and Future Directions](#). Through the evaluation we learned that grantees feel they are stronger organizations, with better capacity, as a result of John Rex Endowment funding. [Funding opportunities](#) continue for this goal as part of our five-year plan.