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## Profiting nonprofits: Alliance teaches how to streamline delivery of service

By David Flaum

Tuesday, October 28, 2008

When you expand programs and training 20-fold in 16 years, chances are you'll run out of space.

That is what's behind the [Alliance for Nonprofit Excellence](#)'s move to more spacious digs in [Clark Tower](#).

"We were on top of each other," said Nancy McGee, executive director.

When it started as the Grant Center in 1992, the alliance ran three or four workshops for nonprofit agencies, their executives and their board members.

"This year we have 60 to 65," said McGee, thus the need for its own training room on top of added office space.

"For the last 16 years, we've been going to various locations to do our training," she said.

"It became very difficult for staff members who were doing the training to do the workshop, pack up, move to a different location, unpack, do a workshop, pack up and move again," McGee said. "It was taking up a lot of their time."

About half of the agency's \$800,000 annual budget comes from training fees, McGee said.

Having its own space to do that training should allow that part of the alliance's work to expand, she said.

And it should help the group's three other divisions -- consulting, aid to nonprofits in obtaining and managing grants and the Program for Nonprofit Excellence.

PNE puts agency leaders into a three-year program starting with assessment of the organization to training, planning to setting up an operations portfolio.

"It's been a truly transforming experience," said Harrison McIver, executive director of

### [Memphis Area Legal Services.](#)

The alliance trainers and consultants looked at finances, delivery of services, staff and program development, plus board members got direction on improving their oversight of the law firm, McIver said.

MALS completes its three-year stint in December.

"I want an extension," McIver said. "We can be exactly where we want to be in a year's time."

The agency will get help after next month from agency consultants at a rate, McIver noted, that was much lower than if MALS hired consultants itself.

The folks at [Habitat for Humanity](#) are also satisfied with the program, said Dwayne Spencer, executive director.

He, too, would like to stay in the program another year.

"We knew we needed help understanding ourselves," Spencer said.

Habitat leaders discovered that housing was only one piece in their mission of helping people in poverty and that the agency could do more, such as building neighborhoods.

McIver and Spencer said their agencies will benefit from the alliance's added training workshops and one other program the Alliance has started with [Christian Brothers University](#) as a partner.

That is called 501(c)3 College. The name comes from the section of the Internal Revenue Code with requirements for agencies to become tax-exempt nonprofit groups.

The college has four certificate programs with courses in seven areas of management, along with a two-year program on organization called Frameworks for Nonprofit Excellence, McGee said.

The 501(c)3 college "is an excellent way for the alliance to heighten its visibility, its focus and being a resource to nonprofits," McIver said.

-- David Flaum: 529-2330

### **Alliance for Nonprofit Excellence**

**Headquarters:** 5100 Poplar

**Executive director:** Nancy McGee

**Business:** To provide, training, consulting, grant writing and administration and other services to nonprofit agencies.

**Annual budget:** \$800,000

**Employees:** 5

**Phone:** 684-6605

**Online:** [npexcellence.org](http://npexcellence.org)



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