

GRANTS

Making a Difference



By Mary E. Chown, Owner, MECA (Mary E. Chown Advising)
Certified Grants Management Specialist, SBRA Member

I always wanted to positively change the world — I just didn't know exactly how. After serving in various capacities within a diverse array of social service agencies for 17 years, I was hooked on making a difference in the lives of others. But how could I make the biggest impact on the greatest number of persons in my lifetime? That was the ultimate question. The answer — fundraising, grant writing and nonprofit consulting.

I started MECA in 2017 in response to the great need for finding and securing grant funding. The money is out there, but how to find it, how to develop a solid project and a competitive application, and how to manage funds once awarded is challenging and time consuming. Nonprofit agencies all over the County are providing amazing services and support for so many people in our communities, and they do it all with very limited resources. By utilizing the education, talents, skills and background I have acquired over many years in the non-profit world, I am able to assist these

nonprofit agencies to advance their effectiveness and secure a sustainable future. It's the most rewarding job imaginable!

Nationally certified Grants Management Specialists excel in guiding government grant applications and ensuring appropriate award management. By assessing organizational readiness for these large and often complicated grants, I realized that many leaders, Boards, staff and agencies needed guidance to build a stronger foundation for not only the grant project, but for the whole organization.

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MECA Services include, but are not limited to, strategic, business, and capital project planning, operational and financial health assessment and consulting, operations and performance improvement, risk management, and of course strategic fundraising and grant proposals.

As I work with multiple organizations, I clearly and continuously see the intense commitment each and every agency has to making a tangible difference in the lives of others. I am truly grateful to be able to participate in new and exciting projects, historic preservations, large scale health projects impacting thousands, and smaller scale services that are desperately needed to fill gaps. I have also witnessed the power of collective impact to advance a humanitarian cause. I believe that by working with each other, instead of competing against each other, non-profits are able to facilitate and ignite partnerships that better steward financial and human resources, increase agency reach, and create an immense positive impact for those in need.

My work continuously validates the effective spirit of compassion and cooperation. In the words of Mother Teresa: "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples."

Grant research and writing is a world of its own and an extremely challenging task for first-time seekers. There is plenty of funding available, but the process and procedures are a mystery to most. Seek professional help, the rewards speak for themselves. Over the past two years, MECA has not only grown but evolved to meet the needs of agencies in Berks County, throughout the state of Pennsylvania, and around the world. I am committed to working as tirelessly as those around me and believe that together, we will positively change the world — Mission accomplished!

Mary E. Chown of, MECA (Mary E. Chown Advising) is a Certified Grants Management Specialist, and a member of Small Business Resource Association. More information visit mecadvising.com and sbrassociation.org

