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## **Building Nonprofit Capacity in the Age of Recovery**

In these times of economic uncertainty, the competition for charitable gifts and government contracts has increased dramatically. By and large, foundations are not only looking to fund good causes, but they are looking to invest in well-run organizations that have the capacity to effect positive community change over the long term. Likewise, the Obama Administration is requiring organizations to invest more in strengthening systems of management and accountability.

In an effort to help nonprofit organizations prepare for change, Valerie F. Leonard will be facilitating *Capacity Building Blocks*<sup>™</sup>, a 10-week workshop series for nonprofit leaders who are serious about maximizing community impact. The interactive workshops will provide an in-depth organizational assessment, and balance of instruction, case studies and group activities designed to help participants strengthen their organizations' infrastructure, and position them for long term sustainability. The workshops will take place every Tuesday, from September 15, through November 17, 2009 at the Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 North Central Park, from 9:00 a.m. through 12:00 noon.

Participants will learn how to

- start a new organization or spin off a new initiative
- develop effective boards
- discern the differences and similarities between strategic plans and business plans, and when it is most appropriate to use each
- develop and implement program evaluation plans
- write effective funding proposals for private foundations, technology and government submittals
- develop budgets that support the overall mission of their organizations and programs
- effectively communicate their organizations' mission, goals and accomplishments to enhance accountability and raise funds
- comply with state and federal government regulations as they relate to nonprofits

Valerie F. Leonard is a local community development consultant with considerable experience in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. Prior to starting her

consulting practice, she ran a small nonprofit organization. Ms. Leonard's recent projects include teaching online courses in finance and budgeting and grant writing for UIC-Great Cities Institute; peer reviewing state and local government proposals for Federal Stimulus funding and developing a strategic plan for a network of organizations addressing issues of hunger and poverty.

Ms. Leonard has a bachelor of arts degree in economics from Spelman College and a master of management degree in finance and marketing from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University. She is a member of the Association of Consultants to Nonprofits and has served as the Co-Chairperson for the African American Community Outreach Committee for the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago. Ms. Leonard may be reached at 773-521-3137 or [valeriefleonard@msn.com](mailto:valeriefleonard@msn.com).