

## MELINDA A. HIGGS

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**SUMMARY:** Values-driven, strategic, and innovative nonprofit professional with a proven history of leading and developing teams and organizations to achieve impact. A recognized leader of high integrity who inspires and builds authentic relationships with team members, boards, external stakeholders, and collaborative partners.

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### AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Visionary Leadership
  - Team Development
  - Commitment to Equity
  - Organizational Development
  - Relationship Building
  - Strategy
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### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### **President & CEO, Colorado Nonprofit Development Center (“CNDC”) September 1999 - Present**

Position Summary: Grow from an initial business plan to a \$20 million organization that accelerates community impact through its core program of fiscal sponsorship and intermediary and grant-making services. Currently fiscally sponsors 70 programs (“projects”) serving 50,000 individuals with 200+ employees and 3,000 volunteers. Projects apply to operate under CNDC’s legal and corporate umbrella, be part of CNDC’s back office, and receive support to further their missions. If selected, projects become part of CNDC, and CNDC is responsible for all project activities, finances, and staff. Intermediary and grant-making services are in partnership with funders.

#### Executive Leadership

- Foster organizational culture reinforcing CNDC’s values through policies, professional development, ongoing learning, team building activities, and executive transparency.
- Manage a high performing team of 18 to provide operational and programmatic excellence.
- Empower project leaders and boards to fulfill their project missions.
- Audit and revise HR practices, board nomination and governance process, and project application and selection applying an equity lens resulting in a more diverse team and board and a more diverse and impactful project portfolio.
- Cultivate customer service philosophy for team interactions with projects, resulting in consistent high ranking from project leaders for customer service, responsiveness, and fee value.

#### Strategy

- Lead board and staff through four strategic vision and mission evolutions, honing CNDC’s vision and values and expanding CNDC’s impact.
- Evaluate CNDC’s effectiveness through annual feedback from projects; 95% indicate they would recommend CNDC to others seeking fiscal sponsorship.
- Promote CNDC with funders, policymakers, and community leaders.
- Expand grant-making capacity to respond to emergency needs, including grant-making of \$10 million to Denver nonprofits and residents during the first two years of COVID and \$1+ million to victims of the Marshall Fire.
- Develop collaborative partnerships with funders, capacity building organizations, and other fiscal sponsors to further CNDC’s mission. Examples include initiating the National Network of

Fiscal Sponsors, the Colorado Collaborative of Nonprofits, and the Denver Nonprofit Emergency Relief (COVID) Fund.

#### Operations

- Oversee financial management of CNDC's \$20 million operation, ensuring legal and regulatory compliance, implementing board policies, and adhering to funding restrictions of 200+ grants a year.
- Work with CNDC's CFO to develop and manage an annual budget.
- Develop and implement HR policies and procedures for 200+ staff that adhere to best practices, encourage effective performance, and promote staff retention.

#### Governance

- Maintain a positive, transparent working relationship with the board as a whole and with individual members.
- Ensure positive board experience for board members, resulting in 80% of board members serving to the end of their maximum term limit [nine years].
- Collaborate closely with the chair and executive committee.
- Serve as a member of the finance, nominating, retirement investment, and ad hoc committees.
- Create opportunities for board members to engage with the team and projects.

#### **Executive Director, Partners Association, 1995 – 1999**

- Built and managed a coalition to successfully lobby for \$1 million yearly in State funds to support Colorado's structured mentoring programs.
- Led association of Colorado one-to-one mentoring programs serving 3,000 youth annually with 20 affiliate organizations. Provided shared services and intermediary grant services to affiliates.

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#### **EDUCATION**

- Master of Public Administration, focus on Public Policy, University of Colorado, Denver
- B.A. Communication Arts, Regis University

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#### **SUMMARY - AFFILIATIONS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND AWARDS**

- Titan 100 – Colorado, 2023
- Steve Graham Award for Building Nonprofit Capacity, Colorado Nonprofit Association, 2020
- Livingston Fellowship, Bonfils Stanton Foundation, 2006
- Steering Committee Member, National Network of Fiscal Sponsors, Current
- Member, Colorado Nonprofit Association Policy Committee, Current
- Co-Chair City of Denver's Nonprofit Task Force, 2021-2022
- Participant in Women's Foundation of Colorado Women's Investment Giving Circle, 2021
- Selected to participate in Nonprofit Executive Leadership Program, El Pomar Foundation/Center for Creative Change; D Thinking Boot Camp, Stanford University; and Leadership Denver, Denver Metro Chamber Leadership Foundation.
- Presenter at Rural Philanthropy Days, Colorado Nonprofit Association conference, National Network Fiscal Sponsors conference, and Grant Manager's conference.