

ALISON ZEHR

Alison Zehr is a consultant for nonprofit arts organizations specializing in strategic and business planning, public art and community development, organizational capacity building, board development, research and philanthropy. She works most frequently with the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation. Prior to becoming a consultant, she was director of Advancing Chicago's Civic Agenda Through the Arts for the City's Department of Planning and Development; director of the Cultural Facilities Fund, a low interest loan fund and technical assistance provider; Director of Community Programs for the Chicago Botanic Garden; executive director of Quad City Arts, a local arts agency; and program director for Friends of the Chicago River. Formerly on the board of 3Arts, a fund dedicated to supporting individual artists, she has been president of the Chicago Public Art Group, an executive committee member of the Iowa Assembly of Local Arts Agencies and the Illinois Alliance for Arts Education, a member of the Rock Island Historic Preservation Commission, an Advisory Board member of Columbia College's Center for Arts Policy and a panelist for the Illinois Arts Council's Partners in Excellence program. She is author of "How to Research Your House" and the "Survey of Chicago's Cultural Landscape" (both commissioned by the City of Chicago). She has also completed research on arts and environmental programs for teens and young adults in the Chicago area; the issues faced by publicly accessible collections in Chicago and Charleston, South Carolina; a scan of the arts organizations in the Low Country of South Carolina; and has served as Chicago project manager for an Americans for the Arts economic impact study. Zehr has led workshops on defining a nonprofit business model, financial management, the basics of a capital campaign, getting ready for a facility project, issues around growth and decision-making in the visual arts.