

Leslie Anderson

After leading the resurgence of Asheville, North Carolina's downtown through a public/private partnership for 10 years, Leslie Anderson, MPA, opened her consulting practice in 1996. Leslie Anderson Consulting, Inc. provides organizational development services (strategic planning, Board development, community collaboration, research, etc.), guidance on crisis management, advocacy and community change, as well as technical assistance to nonprofits, coalitions, foundations and government units across the United States. Her firm has assisted over 100 organizations in their efforts to change, thrive, and achieve their missions. Over the last several years, Leslie worked with the states of Iowa, Arizona and Alaska as a technical assistance and systems-change expert through Smart Start's National Technical Assistance Center. She has an adjunct faculty appointment at UNC's School of Government in Community Economic Development and on three occasions served as an interim nonprofit director. She is on the core faculty of Western North Carolina Nonprofit Pathways, assisting a variety of organizations in building their internal capacity.

Leslie began her professional career as the Public Relations and Program Director for Pisgah Girl Scout Council in Western North Carolina. She moved to the City of Asheville's Parks & Recreation Department and eventually managed an extensive set of neighborhood and city-wide programs and facilities. Her last position with the City was Director of Downtown Development where she led the transformation of a blighted, empty downtown into a vibrant, regional urban center filled with shopping, restaurants, housing, entertainment and commercial businesses that appeals to residents and tourists alike.

In addition to her busy consulting practice, Leslie volunteers her expertise to numerous civic and community organizations, including the Board of Trustees at Warren Wilson College, the Board of Directors of the Girl Scouts Carolinas Peaks 2 Piedmont, the Board of Directors of Leadership Asheville, and the vestry of St. John's Episcopal Church. She was co-founder of both Children First and Kids Voting/Buncombe County. In 1999 the *Asheville Citizen-Times* named her one of "Western North Carolina's 50 Most Influential People of the Century." Western Carolina University College of Arts & Sciences honored Leslie in 2010 with the "Distinguished Alumni Award."