

Susan Fitter Harris  
Owner & Principal Consultant  
Susan Fitter Harris Consulting, LLC  
A Metris Arts Consulting Affiliate



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## PROFILE

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- Founded and leads consulting business that provides strategic planning, fund development, project management, program analysis, and content creation to nonprofits in the community development, arts and culture, and education sectors
- 22 years of experience in community development, completing projects with both national and local focus
- Strong track record of planning and executing federal funding proposals, successfully winning clients more than \$80 million over the past five years.
- Skills clients value include analysis, strong writing, clarity of expression, and insightful interview questions

## EDUCATION

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University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA  
M.A. Urban and Environmental Planning, May 2002  
Concentration: Housing and Community Development

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA  
B.A. May 1994  
Major: Anthropology, Minor: History

## EXPERIENCE

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Susan Fitter Harris Consulting, LLC, Alexandria, VA (July 2014–present)

*Founder and Principal Consultant* Provide services to nonprofit clients including strategic planning, program assessment and fund development • Assist nonprofit organizations to think strategically and focus their efforts into coherent, executable plans that serve their missions • Work with clients to plan and execute compelling grant proposals that expertly connect the organizations' missions and capacities to the individual funders' requirements • Interview stakeholders and perform comparative research to analyze the reach and effectiveness of nonprofit programs, as well as the communication about those programs • Design and execute competitive RFP processes for grantmakers • Create relevant and meaningful content for clients' publications and websites based on original research and interviews

Client list includes: Local Initiatives Support Corporation, NeighborWorks America, City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, National Alliance of State Arts Agencies, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Rural Community Assistance Corporation, The Prosperity Agenda, Elevate, Higher Achievement, the Education Trust, the Center for Community Progress, the Urban Alliance, the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund, Aeon

Recent projects include:

- Research and writing a report on public engagement process and future recommendations for the Chicago Monuments Project

- Research and writing of the “Creative Placemaking Public Resources Guide” for the National Alliance of State Arts Agencies, a comprehensive guide to federal funding sources for creative placemaking projects
- Strategic planning to help Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) launch new programs and refresh existing ones, including long-standing community safety and rural community development initiatives and a new venture supporting educational facilities development
- A research report investigating the role of SBA Small Business Investment Companies in supporting BIPOC-owned small businesses
- A series of “spotlight” articles published on the LISC Institute for Comprehensive Community Development website that provide practical, “how-to” resources for community development practitioners on a variety of topics
- Strategic counsel and writing of federal grant proposals for LISC and Urban Alliance.
- Prospect research, proposal writing and grants management to secure and sustain funding for the Education Trust as the organization reorganized and staffed its development operation
- A series of proposals for LISC Safety & Justice to seek critical grant funding from the U.S. Department of Justice in support of community-engaged policing efforts
- Session planning and speaker recruitment for LISC Family Income and Wealth Building’s annual capacity building conference for workforce developers and financial counselors serving under-invested neighborhoods
- A white paper for LISC’s New York Stabilization Fund that showcases local strategies to combat vacant and “zombie” properties throughout the state
- A comprehensive investigation into how the NeighborWorks America network of locally based affordable housing and community development organizations uses arts- and culture-based strategies to accomplish community development goals
- Brief case studies that tell the stories of 22 LISC-supported creative placemaking projects, including project history, funding resources and community context

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Washington, DC and New York, NY (June 2000-July 2014)  
*Senior Program Officer and Administrator, Field Resources* – Wrote proposals that secured more than \$50 million in grant funds for core work; managed \$10.5 million in federal grant funds, including internal allocations, funder reporting and compliance; assessed potential expansion geographies; synthesizing team research and interviews into final assessment report and recommendations; identified programmatic growth areas and strategized with management around potential funding opportunities and proposals; designed “learning forums” for 200+ employees; coordinated annual program planning process for 30 local programs; coordinated knowledge transfer between LISC headquarters/senior management and field programs, as well as between field staff in different locations.

The Hawthorn Group, LC, Alexandria, VA (September 1998-March 2000)  
*Account Executive* – Researched and wrote briefs on issues in the energy and environmental fields; produced nationwide seminar series on energy and environmental issues

Patton Boggs LLP, Washington, DC (1996-1998)  
*Legal Secretary* – Managed operations for partners including legal research, memos and client relations

ESPN, Bristol, CT (1995-1996)  
*Production Assistant* – Produced video highlights and wrote accompanying scripts for SportsCenter

## PUBLICATIONS

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### REPORTS

*Improving Storefronts: Guidance on developing a storefront improvement program for place-based economic development.* With Teresa Garcia. New York, NY: Local Initiatives Support Corporation, 2022.

*The Saving Power of Community Creativity.* Flint, MI: Center for Community Progress, 2021.

*Creating Opportunity for Diverse- and Women-Owned Small Businesses: Recommendations for the U.S. Small Business Association's SBIC Program.* Los Angeles, CA: Local Initiatives Support Corporation, 2020.

*The Creative Placemaking Public Resources Guide (website: [creativeplacemakingresources.org](http://creativeplacemakingresources.org)).* National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 2020.

*The "Zombie" and Vacant Properties Remediation and Prevention Initiative: Emerging Best Practices.* With Helene Caloir. New York, NY: Local Initiatives Support Corporation, 2018.

*Creative Placemaking on Vacant Properties: Lessons Learned from Four Cities.* With Rachel Engh, Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, Danielle Lewinski and Chelsea A. Allinger. Flint, MI: Center for Community Progress, 2018.

*Creative Community Development: Final Report.* With Rachel Engh and Anne Gadwa Nicodemus. Washington, DC: NeighborWorks America, 2018.

### ARTICLES

"Demonstrating Economic Liberation: How Guaranteed Income Pilot Programs Point to New Solutions to Poverty." *LISC Institute for Community Power website.* Local Initiatives Support Corporation, August 2022.

"With Climate Justice for All: Community Action to Mitigate Climate Change and Build Equitable Green Futures." *LISC Institute for Community Power website.* Local Initiatives Support Corporation, April 2022.

"Social Housing Brings Stability and Self-Determination to Residents." *LISC Institute for Community Power website.* Local Initiatives Support Corporation, October 2021.

"Safeguarding Communities by Reaching Out." *LISC Institute for Community Power website.* Local Initiatives Support Corporation, October 2020.

"Building Small Business Resilience In Good Times and Bad." *LISC Institute for Community Power website.* Local Initiatives Support Corporation, May 2020.

"The Online Opportunity Gap: How CDFIs are Helping Bring Broadband Access to Rural Communities." *LISC Institute for Community Power website.* Local Initiatives Support Corporation, November 2019.

"Passive House Standards Bring Green Living to Affordable Multifamily Housing." *LISC Institute for Community Power website.* Local Initiatives Support Corporation, July 2019.

"Joint Venturing for Nonprofits: the Benefits, the Common Pitfalls and How to Navigate Them." *LISC Institute for Community Power website.* Local Initiatives Support Corporation, June 2019.

"Supporting Entrepreneurs of Color." *LISC Institute for Community Power website.* Local Initiatives Support Corporation, May 2019.

"Navigating the Childcare Gap in Rhode Island." *LISC Institute for Community Power website.* Local Initiatives Support Corporation, April 2019.

“Q&A: Tim Ferguson and Fran Seegull Offer Insights Into the Future of CDFIs.” *LISC Institute for Community Power website*. Local Initiatives Support Corporation, January 2019.

“Creative Placemaking with an Economic Development Lens: Lessons Learned.” *LISC Institute for Community Power website*. Local Initiatives Support Corporation, December 2018.

“LISC Helps Local Governments Move Forward with Housing Plans.” *LISC Institute for Community Power website*. Local Initiatives Support Corporation, November 2018.

“Training Tomorrow's Leaders: Building the next generation of community development leadership.” *LISC Institute for Community Power website*. Local Initiatives Support Corporation, August 2018.

## BOOK CHAPTERS

“Chapter 32: Building Local Capacity in Rural People, Places and Systems” *Investing in Rural Prosperity*. Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, November 2021.

## WEBSITES

*Alternatives to Incarceration*. [www.lisc.org/la-incubation-academy](http://www.lisc.org/la-incubation-academy). Local Initiatives Support Corporation and County of Los Angeles, 2021.

## AFFILIATIONS

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Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery and Potomac Fiber Arts Guild, Alexandria, VA (October 2022-present)  
*Juried member*

Del Ray Artisans, Alexandria, VA (April 2022-present)  
*Exhibiting artist*

Mount Vernon Community School PTA, Alexandria, VA (September 2014-October 2019)  
*Vice President and Chair of Playground Revitalization Capital Campaign* – Raised \$185,000 and led advocacy campaign in support of a new playground. Construction completed September 2019

Local Motion Project, Alexandria, VA (January 2017- December 2018)  
*Founding Board member* – Created local dance nonprofit's first strategic plan; advised on organizational matters and fundraising strategy; assisted staff to write grant proposals

Student Achievement Advisory Committee, Alexandria City Public School Board (Fall 2012-Spring 2016)  
*Appointed member* – Investigated and advised on causes of and solutions for achievement gaps in Alexandria public schools