

# Heather M. Wilson, MBA

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## Professional Summary

I build initiatives that move communities forward. With over a decade of experience spanning philanthropy, public-private partnerships, and place-based investment, I've managed multimillion-dollar revitalization funds, strengthened operational systems, and launched equity-centered programs. I bring a steady, disciplined approach to complex projects — translating broad visions into actionable plans, ensuring compliance and accountability, and aligning cross-sector partners to drive inclusive growth.

I am open to roles across industries where strategy, execution, and communication intersect to drive organizational success — including **Operations, Communications & Stakeholder Engagement, Corporate Social Responsibility**, and **Strategic Partnerships & Business Development**

## Key Skills & Competencies

- **Operations & Compliance:** Grant & Contract Management, Federal & State Compliance, Process Improvement, Budget Oversight, Operational Coordination
- **Communications & Reputation Management:** Multi-Channel Strategies, Storytelling, Executive & Board Communications, Crisis Response, Public Representation
- **Partnerships & Engagement:** Cross-Sector Collaboration, Stakeholder Alignment, Coalition Building, Sponsorships, Community Engagement Models
- **Strategy & Project Leadership:** Program Development, Strategic Planning, Data-Driven Evaluation, Initiative Launch & Scale

## Professional Experience

### Downtown Durham, Inc.

*Downtown Durham Choice Neighborhood Program Manager | Durham, NC | July 2023 – Present*

- Track a \$1.4B pipeline of new construction, infrastructure, and redevelopment investments in downtown Durham and Hayti; deliver federal milestone reporting and cross-sector updates, with \$400M completed to date.
- Manage a portfolio of four HUD-funded revitalization initiatives totaling \$6M, overseeing community engagement, contracting, compliance, procurement, and scheduling; align city/county agencies, developers, small businesses, and nonprofits to sustain momentum.
- Launched 2 of the 4 flagship projects: a \$4M Business Retention & Recruitment Fund for minority/legacy-owned businesses and the restoration of a historic cultural & performing arts center. Continue to oversee implementation and compliance; Round 1 of the fund has 16 businesses in queue totaling \$140K, while the cultural center has secured approvals from NC SHPO and HUD Environmental Review to advance to construction.
- Conceived and launched the first-ever community engagement event for the Durham Housing Authority — the annual Back to School Block Party — raising \$11,000+ and engaging 35+ partners over two years; expanded family support by 60% YOY, establishing a signature tradition that reshaped public perception of the Authority.
- Represent the Durham Choice initiative as a spokesperson and reputation steward; lead multi-channel engagement strategies (surveys, town halls, text campaigns, web updates) that increase transparency, expand participation, and produce branded collateral for high-visibility community events, grants, and partnerships.

## **Aya Birth & Community Wellness (Nonprofit Startup)**

*Project Manager & Founding Board Member | Durham, NC | September 2022 – December 2024*

- Directed launch planning and stakeholder engagement. Crafted a communications strategy that secured \$355K in foundation and government grants and built partnerships with regional and national funders.

## **Family Office**

*Executive & Operations Assistant | Durham, NC | July 2021 – September 2022*

- Designed and launched a philanthropic giving program for a high-net-worth family, deploying \$50K in mission-aligned grants and impact investments. Identified and vetted nonprofit and individual grantees, developed the grantmaking and renewal evaluation framework, and established an annual review structure to drive strategic, values-based contributions.

## **Chapman Partnership for the Homeless**

*Miami, FL | September 2014 – July 2021*

*Project Manager, Office of the President & CEO (Oct 2019 – July 2021)*

- Directed three strategic initiatives advancing inclusive economic mobility and digital service expansion; managed planning, cross-functional coordination, and stakeholder communications.
- Represented the Social Enterprise Academy externally, cultivating sponsor and board relationships and positioning it as a CSR-aligned investment, generating \$240K in new funding and securing program renewals through outcome-driven communications and grant storytelling.

*Executive Assistant to the President & CEO (Feb 2019 – Oct 2019)*

- Supported executive and board communications as liaison to the CEO, while serving on the Emergency Response Team to coordinate crisis communications and operational response during hurricanes.

*Development Specialist (Nov 2017 – Feb 2019)*

- Managed corporate and individual donor portfolios (\$25K–\$100K) and launched a year-end campaign that increased fundraising revenue 30% YoY; trained staff in Raiser's Edge NXT to strengthen donor tracking and retention.

*Volunteer Specialist (Sep 2014 – Nov 2017)*

- Directed a volunteer engagement program coordinating 20,000+ annual volunteers and CSR-aligned service days; migrated operations to VolunteerHub to streamline registration, communication, and reporting.
- Built partnerships with 15+ community organizations, driving a 20% increase in placements and 10% increase in hours served, while producing recognition events that improved retention.

## **Education**

### **Master of Business Administration**

Florida International University – Miami, FL | 2017

### **Bachelor of Arts in Political Science & Criminal Justice**

Rutgers University – New Brunswick, NJ | 2013