



Shelly Foston

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Summary

Senior Mediator and Program Manager at Meridian Institute with more than 20 years of experience. Integral to Meridian's work on climate change and land use and on developing and implementing complex alliances, particularly among foundations and other donors. Experienced working with public- and private-sector organizations to help develop and refine their strategies and evaluate and help improve their organizational and strategic effectiveness. Has worked on projects in many issue areas, including agricultural development, climate change, transportation policy, ocean and coastal policy reform, and with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the private sector on public/private partnerships for critical infrastructure protection. Earned an M.S. in Resource Policy and Planning, and an M.B.A., from the University of Michigan. Earned a B.A. in Political Science from Yale University.

Meridian Experience

Meridian Institute

2005–Present

Meridian Institute designs and facilitates collaborative processes that help diverse parties identify critical issues, build relationships and trust, construct innovative solutions, and implement durable decisions. These collaborative processes address challenges at the local, state, national, and international levels, and involve leaders from government agencies, industry, nongovernmental organizations, and international institutions. Meridian also assists organizations in conducting strategy development and planning.

Senior Mediator and Program Manager

Manages and facilitates policy dialogues, negotiations, and strategy development projects involving teams of facilitators. Conducts convening assessments, designs collaborative processes, plans and facilitates meetings, helps participants develop consensus documents, and conducts implementation activities. Selected highlights are summarized below:

- Leads a Meridian team facilitating the conceptualization, design, and successful implementation of the Climate and Land Use Alliance, a multi-year, multi-foundation partnership working to minimize the negative climate, social, and biological impacts of deforestation and agriculture.

- Worked closely with donors and Steering Committee members of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), a multi-lateral fund focused exclusively on agriculture and rural development in the world's poorest nations. Meridian conducted in-depth interviews, developed materials, and facilitated working groups to help Steering Committee members identify and constructively discuss how GAFSP's governance and operations could be improved over time, and then initiate implementation of those improvements.
- Member of the Meridian team that served as a neutral convener and facilitator and independent financial agent for an independent assessment by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) of Coca-Cola facilities in India. The assessment included a review of Coca-Cola's water management practices and procedures for managing input water, relating to allegations of pesticide contamination.
- Co-facilitated a workshop for CEOs and senior executives from major agriculture-oriented corporations in the international private sector, Center Directors from the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and the leadership of the CGIAR. This first-of-its-kind workshop resulted in a set of commitments for future interaction and collaboration between the participants.
- Facilitated a group of Sector Coordinating Council and Government Coordinating Council members to develop the initial Sector-Specific Plan for critical infrastructure protection. Also worked extensively with members of the transportation and commercial facility sectors to help them organize, establish governance procedures, and begin working collaboratively on priorities related to critical infrastructure protection in their sector.
- Please see <http://merid.org/staff/sfoston> for a full list of projects completed.

Previous Experience

Environmental Defense, Alliance for Environmental Innovation

Boston, Massachusetts 2004

Strategy Consultant

Facilitated staff dialogue to develop criteria for assessing potential and existing projects. Conducted in-depth research on the pulp and paper industries to support a new strategy for engagement by the organization.

University of Michigan, Ecosystem Management Initiative

Ann Arbor, Michigan 2003

Fellow

Researched and developed case study examples of collaborative ecosystem management initiatives. Designed and developed materials for a web-based negotiation and relationship management toolbox for collaborative ecosystem management practitioners.

Vantage Partners

Boston, Massachusetts

1997–2002

Consultant

Worked closely with senior executives to build and implement negotiation and alliance management infrastructure and skills training within Fortune 100 multinational companies. Industries included IT, oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, and agricultural products.

Environmental Issues Management

Washington, DC

1995–1997

Public Affairs Consultant

Worked with senior corporate staff, outside counsel, and technical consultants to manage strategy and communications related to environmental liability, permit renewal, and industrial transfer or sale. Facilitated public meetings of 20–100 people designed to respond to concerns, clarify risks, and discuss appropriate remedial action for local Superfund sites.

Education**University of Michigan**

M.S., Resource Policy and Planning

M.B.A.

2005

Yale University

B.A., Political Science and Studies in the Environment

1995