

Jennifer Bassignani

SPHR | Human Resources & Operations Consultant

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Professional Summary

HR strategist and operations consultant with 20+ years of experience partnering with small businesses, nonprofits, and leadership teams to build high-functioning organizations. Deep expertise in the full employee lifecycle, policy and procedure development, board governance, and leadership coaching. Since founding Essential Operations in 2020, has served a diverse portfolio of clients across multiple industries — continuously expanding expertise and delivering tailored, high-impact HR solutions.

Core Competencies

Strategy & Leadership: High-level HR strategy, leadership coaching for managers and business owners, organizational development

Policies & Compliance: Employee handbook development, policy and procedure creation, HR compliance, employment law

Employee Lifecycle: Recruiting, onboarding, performance management, professional development, offboarding

Board Governance: Board training, governance policy development, bylaws, board recruitment and onboarding, committee management

Operations: Payroll oversight, benefits administration, HR department build-out, nonprofit operations

Professional Experience

HR Consultant | *Essential Operations — Human Resources Consulting* 2020 – Present

Self-employed/Owner | Durango, CO | Serving small businesses and nonprofits

- Provide fractional HR consulting and support to a diverse roster of small businesses and nonprofits across multiple industries, continuously deepening knowledge and skill through varied client engagements
- Partner with business owners and leadership teams on high-level HR strategy, organizational design, and culture development
- Create and implement employee handbooks, HR policies, and operational procedures tailored to each organization's needs
- Support the full employee lifecycle including recruiting, onboarding, performance management, and offboarding
- Coach managers and owners on leadership best practices, employee relations, and team development
- Train Boards of Directors and help organizations establish strong governance policies, procedures, and practices
- Serve as HR consultant for Durango's Small Business Development Center

Operations Associate Director | *Conservation Lands Foundation* 2010 – 2020

National nonprofit | Durango, CO headquarters

- Partnered with Senior Finance and Operations Director and Board of Directors to enhance internal operations and build organizational capacity
- Developed and continuously improved HR infrastructure including recruiting, onboarding, offboarding, performance management, and professional development programs
- Authored and maintained the Employee Handbook and HR Resource and Procedure Guide
- Oversaw payroll submission and reconciliation, 401(k), benefits administration, and annual health insurance audits

- Assisted the Executive Director and Board Chair with board governance, including bylaws, board recruitment and onboarding, committee management, and preparation of board meeting materials
- Managed Board-led Executive Committee and Grassroots Network Committee, establishing quarterly goals and action plans
- Coordinated planning of two board meetings and two staff planning retreats annually, plus the organization-wide Rendezvous event
- Oversaw organizational insurance coverage with annual compliance audits
- Managed IT infrastructure including vendor contracts, equipment procurement, and staff training on systems
- Championed equity, inclusion, and diversity initiatives across the organization

Front & Back Office Manager | Medical Assistant | HR | Stillwell Foot & Ankle 2002 – 2005 | 2007 – 2010

Durango, CO

- Managed front and back-office operations for a medical practice, overseeing scheduling, patient relations, and administrative functions
- Handled human resources responsibilities including hiring, onboarding, and staff management

Certifications

Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) | HR Certification Institute (HRCI)

Volunteer & Board Service

Secretary , <i>Human Program Foundation</i>	2025 – Present
Board Member , <i>Parker's Animal Rescue</i>	2023 – 2025
Board Member , <i>Durango Area of Human Resource Management (DAHARM)</i>	2021 – 2023
Board Member , <i>Women's Resource Center</i>	2016 – 2021

Education

Business Studies | *Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO* 1991 – 1993