

Career Opportunities in Nonprofit Management

There are nearly 1.3 million nonprofit (voluntary, community-based, functional, or charitable) institutions in the United States alone. Nonprofit institutions play an important role in community life and are an integral part of the economic, political, and social structure of our nation. Certainly its most distinguishing characteristic is that nonprofits do not attempt to make a profit. Instead, their primary goal is to advance, advocate, or pursue a cause central to the organization's existence and mission. These missions can range from women's rights in the United States to third-world economic development. Workdays in nonprofit organizations are often long, with financial rewards not always matching effort or responsibility. Furthermore, many nonprofits face a continual crisis of resources.

The size, diversity, and activity of nonprofit organizations have grown dramatically over the past decade as a result of government efforts to "privatize" services and programs. This sector employs approximately 12 million people, expends \$120 billion in annual personnel costs, and represents \$340 billion in total annual budget outlays.

Career Paths and Entry Salaries

The nonprofit sector offers multiple employment options for Master's degree graduates. Examples of job titles include: Assistant Director of Fundraising, Program Analyst, Program Director, Program Officer, Marketing/Research Associate, Director, Community Outreach Coordinator, Finance Director, Director of Information Systems and Director of Public Relations. It is possible to be hired as an Executive Director of a small organization. Entry-level salaries range from the mid \$20's to the \$40's depending on the size of the organizational budget, the number of staff, and the diversity of qualifications.

Following the entry level, one may assume positions of increasing responsibility in functional areas, program or service delivery, and/or general management. Primary job functions can include working with a Board of Directors, public and community groups, fundraising, media, clients and other nonprofit organizations. Career advancement depends on the size and mission of each nonprofit, as well as your dedication to the organization. There are unlimited opportunities to jump from the nonprofit sector to the private and public/government sectors because of continuous interaction with institutions in these areas. Probable career outcomes are Senior Executive Director, Program Manager, Government Affairs, or equivalent positions in the private and public sectors.

Qualifications Necessary / Application Procedures to Enter Field

A Master's degree in Public Administration, Public Affairs, International Affairs, Business Administration or a specialized degree in nonprofit management is usually needed as well as a strong interest in the issues related to the mission of the nonprofit organization. It is helpful to gain professional or volunteer experience with related nonprofit organizations, and it is expected that candidates have excellent oral and written communication skills. Because these organizations are often involved in planning large events and activities, it is desirable that employees have experience in motivating, training, and supervising others. Due to budget constraints that non-profits often face, it is necessary to work creatively with limited human and financial resources. Overseas experience and proficiency in a foreign language are often needed for effective work in many international nonprofit organizations.

Sample Employers

- American Red Cross, www.redcross.org
- CARE, www.care.org
- Committee to Protect Journalists, www.cpj.org
- Easter Seals, www.easterseals.org
- Ford Foundation, www.fordfound.org
- Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, www.lls.org
- Meridian International Center, www.meridian.org
- NAFSA – Association of International Educators, www.nafsa.org
- National Organization for Women, www.now.org
- Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations, www.oano.org/career-opportunities
- United Way of Central Ohio, www.liveunitedcentralohio.org
- World Vision, www.worldvision.org

Demand and Future Challenges of Profession

Nonprofit management is an expanding and dynamic career field characterized by the growth of new organizations and new programs developed to improve the human condition. Furthermore, the outsourcing of previously government-managed programs to the nonprofit sector continues to serve as a catalyst for new positions. Finally, there continues to be considerable turnover in the nonprofit world based on the upward mobility and financial challenges of this profession.

Resources For More Information

Associations/Websites

- American Society for Public Administration, www.aspanet.org/
- Independent Sector, www.independentsector.org
- Chronicle of Philanthropy, philanthropy.com/jobs
- Community Career Center, nonprofitjobs.org
- Council for Advancement and Support of Education, www.case.org
- Feminist Majority Foundation, www.feminist.org
- Foundation Center, fdncenter.org
- Idealist.org, www.idealists.org
- Institute for Global Communications, www.igc.org
- Moving Ideas Network, movingideas.org/content/en/jobs.htm
- Non-Profit Career Network, www.nonprofitcareer.com
- Non-Profit Oyster, www.nonprofitoyster.com
- Opportunity Knocks, www.opportunityknocks.org