Career Opportunities in
NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT

Description of the Field
There are nearly 1.5 million nonprofit (voluntary, community-based, functional, or charitable) institutions in the United States alone. Nonprofit institutions play an important role in community life and form an integral part of the economic, political, and social spheres of the country. The nonprofit organization’s 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 overseas relief and development assistance. Work days in nonprofit organizations are often long, with financial compensation 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 11.4 million people, expends $532 billion in annual personnel costs, and provides 5.4% of the nation’s GDP or $905.9 billion in output. (www.independentsector.org)

Career Paths and Entry Salaries
The nonprofit sector offers multiple employment options for master’s degree graduates. Examples of job titles for those entering the nonprofit management field include: Assistant Director of Fundraising, Program Analyst, Program Director, Program Officer, Marketing/Research Associate, Community Outreach Coordinator, Finance Director, Director of Information Systems, and Director of Public Relations. It is even possible to be hired as an executive director of a small organization. Entry-level salaries range from the low to mid $30,000s to the high $40,000s, depending on the size of the organizational budget, the number of staff members, 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 one’s dedication to the organization.

QUALIFICATIONS TO ENTER THE FIELD
+ Master’s degree in public administration, public affairs, international affairs, business administration, or a specialized degree in nonprofit management.
+ Strong interest in the issues related to the mission of the particular nonprofit organization.
+ Professional or volunteer experience with related nonprofit organizations.
+ Excellent oral and written communication skills.
+ Experience in motivating, training, and supervising others.
+ Ability to work creatively with limited human and financial resources.
+ For international nonprofit organizations, overseas experience and proficiency in a foreign language.

Updated: 8/16
There are unlimited opportunities to jump from the nonprofit sector to the private and public/government sectors because of the continuous interaction of institutions in these areas. Potential career outcomes include Senior Executive Director, Program Manager, Government Affairs Director, and equivalent positions in the private and public sectors. Nonprofit employment by sector includes: 57% for health services, 15% for education, 13% for social assistance, 7% for civic associations, 4% for other, 3% for arts and culture, and 2% for professional services. (http://ccss.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/01/NED_National_2012.pdf)

Sample Group of Employers
- Academy for Educational Development – aed.org
- American Red Cross – redcross.org
- CARE – care.org
- Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) – cejil.org
- Easter Seals – easter-seals.org
- Ford Foundation – fordfound.org
- For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) – usfirst.org
- International Rescue Committee – rescue.org
- Meridian International Center – meridian.org
- NAFSA – Association of International Educators – nafsa.org
- Population Action International – populationaction.org
- Soros Foundation – soros.org
- The United Way – national.unitedway.org
- World Vision – worldvision.org

Resources for Additional Information

Associations
- American Association of Grant Professionals – grantprofessionals.org
- American Society for Public Administration – aspanet.org
- Association of Fundraising Professionals – afpnet.org
- Association of Professional Researchers for Advancement – aprahome.org
- Independent Sector – independentsector.org
- National Association of Planning Councils – http://nationalassociationofplanningcouncils.blogspot.com/

LinkedIn Groups
- Association of Consultants to Nonprofits – linkedin.com/groups?gid=954607
- Jobs in Nonprofits – linkedin.com/groups?gid=1814873
- Start-Up Non-Profits – linkedin.com/groups?gid=1703197

FUTURE CHALLENGES OF THE PROFESSION

The nonprofit sector is a major structural and economic force in the United States and abroad. Nonprofit organizations continue to face challenges of mission definition, governance, funding and financial viability, tax status, operations, program management and program delivery, effectiveness, and accountability. In this volatile economy, new challenges include increased commercial pressures and competition from the private sector, as well as pushback on advocacy activities and scrutiny of funding. Changing demographics and technological advances also play a role in the impact and efficacy of nonprofit programs and services.
Internet Resources
- Alliance for Nonprofit Management – allianceonline.org
- Community Career Center – nonprofitjobs.org
- Feminist Majority Foundation – http://jobs.feminist.org/
- Foundation Center – fdncenter.org
- Idealist.org – idealist.org
- Institute for Global Communications – igc.org/html/jobs.html
- National Center on Nonprofit Enterprise – nationalcne.org
- Network for Good – networkforgood.org
- Non-Profit Career Network – nonprofitcareer.com
- Non-Profit Oyster – nonprofitoyster.com
- Opportunity Knocks – opportunityknocks.org
- PNP Staffing – https://pnpanline.com/

Publications