




MINNESOTA NONPROFIT
JOB SEEKERS' GUIDE



MINNESOTA
COUNCIL OF
NONPROFITS

ABOUT THE MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF NONPROFITS

Established in 1987, the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) is a membership organization with 1,500 nonprofit members representing all nonprofit activity areas, budget sizes, and geographic regions of Minnesota.

As Minnesota's membership association of nonprofit organizations, we work with our members, foundations, businesses, and government to provide the information and services Minnesota's nonprofits need.

Information

To gather the management, policy, and fundraising information nonprofits need, MCN makes connections with experts from around the state and nation. Utilizing the latest advances in technology, we help Minnesota nonprofits plug into the resources they need through our comprehensive directories, reports, Web site, www.mncn.org.

Education and Training Programs

Each year MCN offers over 40 low-cost workshops and briefings to cover proven methods and new trends in fundraising, technology, management, and public policy. Each fall, our members gather at our Annual Conference to recognize the sector's accomplishments, discuss new initiatives, and share collective knowledge.

Public Policy

As the state's advocate for the nonprofit sector, MCN works on behalf of Minnesota's nonprofits at the state legislature, with city and county governments, and with Minnesota's congressional delegation. MCN also helps nonprofits be effective advocates, researches critical economic and fiscal policy issues, and educates the public about nonprofit accountability.

Cost-saving Programs and Endorsed Service Providers

Using the bargaining power of our hundreds of members, MCN has negotiated a growing list of group discounts for MCN members. Also, we've researched and identified affordable and high-quality vendors for a growing list of products and services.

For more information about the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and MCN membership, please call 651-642-1904 (or toll-free at 800-289-1904) or visit our web site at www.mncn.org.

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The labor force in the United States works for one of three sectors of our economy: government (also known as the public sector), business (also known as the private sector), and the nonprofit sector. This handbook specifically addresses the nonprofit sector as an employer in the United States and, more specifically, in the state of Minnesota.

This guide includes information about:

- the size and scope of the nonprofit sector
- differences between nonprofit jobs and other jobs
- what it is like to work for a nonprofit organization
- salaries and benefits in the nonprofit sector
- tips on finding a job in the nonprofit sector
- other resources available for nonprofit job seekers

Overall, this guide provides a variety of suggestions, information, and tips to help with the beginning of a job search in Minnesota's nonprofit sector. The purpose of the *Minnesota Nonprofit Job Seeker's Guide* is to generate good ideas for the individual job seeker to put to work during their job search.

THE NONPROFIT SECTOR IN THE U.S.

The nonprofit sector plays a large role in the economic, social, and political life of the United States. There are currently 1.4 million nonprofit organizations in the U.S. This includes 822,817 charitable organizations (designated by the IRS as 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations), 119,515 social welfare organizations (designed by the IRS as 501(c)(4) tax-exempt organizations), and 385,874 religious organizations. Economically, the nonprofit sector represents 6.1% of the national economy and brings in \$664.8 billion in revenues annually. The U.S. nonprofit sector employs 10.9 million people; this represents 7.1% of the total U.S. workforce.

THE NONPROFIT SECTOR IN MINNESOTA

Nonprofits are also a large and significant part of Minnesota's economy. The last ten years have seen Minnesota's nonprofit sector grow faster than the state's economy as a whole with the number of nonprofit organizations and the number of employees both growing by 5% per year for the past 10 years. By 2004, Minnesota had 5,900 financially active charities.

The nonprofit sector also employs many people in Minnesota. As of 2004, nonprofits in this state employed a total of 253,537 people, which represents 10% of Minnesota's work force.

The steady cycle of growth nonprofits have experienced is predicted to continue due to several factors including:

1. The massive devolution of responsibility from the federal government to the states, particularly with respect to welfare reform — This devolution has resulted in increased demands from state and local government for human services from the nonprofit sector.
2. The current strong economy in Minnesota — Increased corporate profits and a greater return on foundation investments means both corporate and private foundations have more money to put into grantmaking. Therefore nonprofits are receiving greater financial support from foundations to expand current programs and start new initiatives.
3. Higher levels of nonprofit innovation and effectiveness — Minnesota's nonprofit organizations continue to find new ways to expand their services and diversify their income stream leading to increased organizational stability and staffing.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NONPROFIT JOBS AND JOBS IN OTHER SECTORS?

Beyond the current statistics on the size and scope of the nonprofit sector in the U.S. and in Minnesota, there are three important points which are central to understanding nonprofits as employers:

1. When nonprofits provide services to the public, they act in ways that are qualitatively different than the way business and government service providers do.
2. Nonprofits play an important societal role in strengthening this country's democracy.
3. The autonomy and flexibility of the nonprofit organization is essential to the achievements of the sector.

Given the size and history of the nonprofit sector, one might think that the differences in service effectiveness between nonprofits, business, and government would be well-documented but they are not. However, comparative studies have shown that:

- Nonprofit child care tends to be of higher quality than private child care chains.

- Nonprofit nursing homes use less sedatives than private nursing homes.
- Nonprofit vocational training has lower loan default rates than private vocational training.
- Nonprofit housing experiences fewer tenant-caused damages than private or government rental housing.
- Clients of nonprofit service agencies report that they feel better treated than clients of government agencies.

The important factor in each of these situations is the relationship between the organization providing the service and the person receiving it. Job seekers should note that nonprofits tend to attract and hire employees who are motivated by intrinsic rewards – the feeling that having a meaningful job is just as important as the salary. Intrinsically motivated employees are especially effective in inspiring trust, openness, and a personal connection with the people they serve. Frequently, nonprofit job interviews address the motivation and intention of the prospective employee. Common questions include: Why do you want to work here? How do you feel about our mission? What personal connections do you have to our work? Therefore it is important for job seekers to explore their intentions for seeking employment in the nonprofit sector.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO WORK FOR A NONPROFIT?

Nonprofit jobs give employees the freedom and opportunity to:

1. Break new ground every day. Often nonprofit employees are developing and implementing new programs and enhanced procedures to make the organization run more effectively and efficiently.
2. Learn something new every week. In many nonprofit organizations, there are many jobs to do and not enough people to do them. As a result, nonprofit employees find themselves learning new skills like copy writing, Web design, desktop publishing, policy advocacy, event planning, and accounting management to fill gaps in the organization. Therefore, nonprofit employees are continually gathering new skills that they can carry with them to other jobs.

Because some nonprofit jobs are flexible in terms of their education and work experience requirements, the career track for a motivated employee can be fast – but this usually means jumping to another organization because of the limited number of positions in most organizations.

Nonprofit jobs also tend to be flexible and to grow with the employee. The opportunities increase as responsibilities shift within an organization or programs grow and change

Nonprofit employees report higher overall job satisfaction than employees in government or business. Nonprofit employees rate their jobs highly because they give them the opportunity to:

1. Do things that don't go against their conscience.
2. Do things for other people.
3. Use their own judgment.
4. Utilize their own methods of doing the job.
5. Do something that makes use of their abilities.
6. Derive a great feeling of accomplishment from doing their job.

However, nonprofits employees also report frustration over perceived low rates of pay and lack of opportunity for advancement. As you'll see in the next section, this perception is not entirely accurate.

WHAT ARE SALARIES AND BENEFITS IN THE NONPROFIT SECTOR?

Salaries and benefits vary greatly between organizations. In Minnesota, organizations with larger budget sizes tend to pay more than those with smaller budget sizes. Also, nonprofits located in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area tend to pay greater salaries than organizations in greater Minnesota.

Wage gap between nonprofit employees and other employees

Minnesota's nonprofit employees do make less than employees working for business or government. The average wage in the state's nonprofit sector is 12% less than average state wage. However, this gap continues to decrease; the difference between nonprofit employee wages and other employees was 18.2% in 1987.

Overall, nonprofit employees can expect nonprofit salaries to increase due to many factors:

- The ability of nonprofits to earn income is increasing.
- Foundation grants and individual donations to nonprofits are growing.
- Stronger comparative salary information is now available.
- Low unemployment means more competition for skilled workers in all sectors.

As a result, nonprofit employees are in a better position than ever before to negotiate decent wages.

Entry-level salaries in the nonprofit sector

In this section, you will find job descriptions and annual median salaries for common entry-level positions in Minnesota's nonprofit sector. This information is from the *2004 Minnesota Nonprofit Salary and Benefits Survey*, published by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits.

Development Associate \$33,534 per year

Organizes and implements administrative systems to ensure an effective and efficient development effort. Records, processes, and acknowledges gifts. Responds to donor inquiries. Maintains and manages donor databases and prepares fundraising reports. Typical Requirements: Bachelor's degree or equivalent plus one to three years of experience.

Program Coordinator \$31,624 per year

Organizes and coordinates one program of an organization as the only staff person assigned to that program. Develops activities and related timelines to meet established program goals. Tracks program expenses to ensure they do not exceed the program's budget. Evaluates program results and prepares related reports for program management. This is a non-supervisory position. Typical Requirements: Bachelor's degree or equivalent plus one to three years of experience.

Program Assistant \$25,973 per year

Assists program management staff by performing specific duties related to the administration of one or more of the organization's programs. Works under the close and regular supervision of a program director or manager. Gathers and enters program data for program evaluation. May participate in direct client/participant contact and community outreach. This is a non-supervisory position. Typical Requirements: Associate's degree plus four years of related experience or Bachelor's degree or equivalent with no previous experience.

Administrative Assistant \$28,364 per year

Performs administrative support for the organization as a whole or for a department of the organization. Assists with various administrative tasks, such as budget preparation and control, filing and recordkeeping, preparation of materials and minutes for Board and Committee meetings, and other special projects as assigned. Handles routine correspondence and other requests for information. Compiles, stores, retrieves, and reports organizational and program data as needed. Typical Requirements: Associate's degree plus one to three years of related experience or Bachelor's degree or equivalent with no previous experience.

Direct Services Advocate \$27,653 per year

Provides direct support to clients who are in need of crisis intervention. Determines client needs according to established assessment procedures. Helps clients coordinate available resources to resolve crises. Advocates on behalf of the client and mediates to resolve conflicts. Develops and maintains referral resources for clients. Typical Requirements: Associate's degree (Bachelor's degree or equivalent preferred) plus one to three years of experience working with clients at risk.

Job Developer/Job Coach \$26,359 per year

Works with clients to develop their career goals and assists them in addressing their personal and family needs. Identifies employment, education and career options. Assists clients with resume writing, provides job/school readiness counseling, and develops resource and referrals to help clients work toward goals. Typical Requirements: Bachelor's degree in social work or related fields plus one to three years of experience working with people from diverse backgrounds, ethnic cultures, and economic and social situations.

Executive-level salaries in the nonprofit sector

In this section, you'll find median salaries and job descriptions for common management-level jobs in the nonprofit sector.

<i>Executive Director</i>	<i>\$72,259 per year</i>
<i>Finance Director</i>	<i>\$65,002 per year</i>
<i>Public Relations/Communications Director</i>	<i>\$52,135 per year</i>
<i>MIS Director</i>	<i>\$63,411 per year</i>
<i>Development Director</i>	<i>\$62,948 per year</i>
<i>Program Director</i>	<i>\$51,434 per year</i>
<i>Public Policy Director</i>	<i>\$64,991 per year</i>

Benefits – insurance, retirement plans, vacation and other paid time off

Overall, benefits currently being offered by Minnesota nonprofits are fairly competitive compared to the business and government sectors. However, smaller nonprofit organizations are less likely to offer health insurance and retirement benefits. The benefits information that follows is also from the *2004 Minnesota Nonprofit Salary and Benefits Survey*.

Health Insurance

- 82% of nonprofits offer medical insurance to their employees. (These organizations represent 98% of nonprofit employees.)
- Of those organizations that offer medical insurance, 46.6% will cover both the employee and the employee's family.

Retirement/Savings Plans

- 82.4% of nonprofits offer a retirement plan to their employees. However, not all of these organizations make a contribution to their employees' retirement plans.

Paid time off

- This tends to be an area where nonprofits are more generous than business and government.
- On average, vacation after one year of employment averages 11.6 days. Sick time after one year of employment averages 10.5 days.

Additional sources of salaries and benefits information

Determining the salary range and benefits of nonprofit jobs can be somewhat difficult as job descriptions and expectations vary depending on the size of the organization and its funding. However, knowledge of salaries and benefits currently being offered by nonprofits is crucial to the job search and salary negotiation process. Two reliable sources of information about nonprofit salaries and benefits in Minnesota are available:

The 2004 Minnesota Nonprofit Salary and Benefits Survey

This information was compiled from a survey of 696 Minnesota nonprofits representing all nonprofit activity areas, geographic regions of Minnesota, and annual operating budget sizes. For further information or to request an order form, please call the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits at 651-642-1904 or visit their web site at www.mnncn.org.

HOW CAN I FIND A JOB IN THE NONPROFIT SECTOR?

Successful nonprofit job seekers use a combination of traditional and not-so-traditional strategies for finding the perfect nonprofit job. In the nonprofit sector, simply relying on the employment ads in the Sunday paper probably will not work for most job seekers. Nonprofits are less likely to advertise in large newspapers because of the cost. At the same time, they are more likely to post job openings in small neighborhood papers and newspapers that serve particular audiences like women and communities of color because space is more affordable and doing so may be part of an equal opportunity plan.

A successful nonprofit job search may employ one, some, or all of the following job search strategies.

- Find job openings through traditional and not-so-traditional means.
- Research particular organizations you find interesting and find out if they have openings.
- Try to create a nonprofit job for yourself.
- Always keep gathering new skills and knowledge.

Finding job openings through traditional and not-so-traditional means: Newspaper ads and Web sites

- *Star Tribune* and *St. Paul Pioneer Press* – While not all nonprofits will post their openings in these papers, many will as an easy way to let job seekers know of their open positions. Particularly valuable is the Sunday edition of these papers.
- Neighborhood newspapers and periodicals written for specific communities (like *The Minnesota Womens' Press*). These papers are distributed free in a variety of locations, including libraries, restaurants, and community centers.
- Nonprofit-specific publications (including the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* and *Nonprofit Times*)
- Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Web site (www.mnncn.org) includes Minnesota nonprofit job postings plus links to other job posting sites (both individual nonprofit sites and Internet job posting services).
- ACCESS: This national nonprofit organization provides employment and career development services to nonprofit job seekers. Their Web site features online articles on the nonprofit job search as well as a subscription sign-up to *Community Jobs* (a newspaper with nonprofit job postings). Visit their Web site at www.accessjobs.org.
- www.Socialservice.com: This Web site contains social services job postings from around the U.S. subdivided by state plus free e-mail notifications of new listings.
- Action Without Borders (www.idealists.org) is a national nonprofit that has a listing of nonprofit jobs around the country. They also have a nonprofit career center with resources such as resume writing tips.

Researching interesting nonprofits

Another job search strategy is to decide the types of nonprofits that interest you or an issue area that you care about, find some organizations working in that area, and research those organizations. Information on nonprofits that you are interested should not be difficult to find. Once you have done your research, set up some informational interviews. An informational interview can provide you with professional connections in your area of interest and an opportunity to learn about the career path of someone working on an

issue or in a position you are interested in. Your background research on the organization will prove you are familiar with the organization and the issues that nonprofits are currently facing.

For each organization you are researching, be sure to find the answers to these questions:

- What is the organization's mission?
- What types of programs do they carry out?
- Where do they get their money?
- How long has the organization been around?
- Has funding and number of employees been growing?

The following methods should help you find out more about the organizations that interest you.

- Use *The Minnesota Nonprofit Directory* to find organizations. This publication from the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits provides a concentrated look at thousands of individual Minnesota nonprofits. For each organization, it lists the address, phone number, nonprofit activity area, executive director, expenditures, assets, and funding sources. Visit www.mncn.org to purchase the directory.
- Get the organization's annual report by requesting it from the organization.
- Look at the organization's tax return (known as IRS Form 990) on the Guidestar Web site at www.guidestar.org.
- Do a search on the Internet and see if you can find the organization's own Web site. If you can not locate a website for the organization, take note of which Web site mention the organization you are interested in- these may include foundations that fund the organization or other nonprofits the organization works in collaboration with.
- Do a search for newspaper articles mentioning the organization. Both the *Pioneer Press* and *Star Tribune* have great archive services on their Web sites and in most public libraries.
- Public libraries should not be overlooked as a resource in your job search. Five libraries in the state have Foundation Center Collections which hold documents related to fundraising as well as many other publications pertaining to the nonprofit sector. These libraries also contain job search and career planning materials. The Regional Foundation Centers are located at the Minneapolis Public Library, Downtown branch; St. Paul Public Library, Downtown branch; Duluth Public Library; Southwest State University Library in Marshall; and Rochester Public Library.
- The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits member list includes links to many of their member's Web sites, www.mncn.org/mem_links.htm.

Creating a job for yourself

There are several methods other nonprofit job seekers have used to get a job with their dream nonprofit employer. You could work with an existing nonprofit to develop a project or program and then secure funding for the program and your salary. Also, try researching lists of recent recipients of large grants to discover nonprofits that may be expanding programs as a result of new money. And consider starting a nonprofit yourself based on an issue you care about.

Gathering new skills

Nonprofits value employees that continue to gather new skills for their jobs and new knowledge about nonprofit management. There are several ways one can do this.

- You could take classes to gain skills either specific to nonprofits or valuable to nonprofits (including grant writing, program development and evaluation, technology, Web site design and maintenance, newsletters, and desktop publishing). Short one-time classes are available through these and other organizations. For a list of more organizations offering these kinds of classes visit www.mncn.org/event_other.htm.
 - Minnesota Council of Nonprofits- www.mncn.org 651-642-1904
 - MAP for Nonprofits - www.mapfornonprofits.org 651-647-1216
 - Center for Nonprofit Management at the University of St. Thomas- www.stthomas.edu/cbe 612-962-4290
 - University of Wisconsin Superior- www2.uwsuper.edu/cee/AYC/nonprofit 715-394-8030
 - Minnesota Council on Foundations- www.mcf.org 612-338-1989
 - Science Museum of Minnesota Computer Education Center- www.comped.smm.org 651-221-4722
 - HandsOn Twin Cities- www.handsontwincities.org 612-379-4900
 - Assoc. of Fundraising Professionals- MN Chapter- <http://afpminnesota.org/calendar.htm> 651-917-1835
- Keep up-to-date on nonprofit issues by subscribing to nonprofit journals and magazines like the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, *Nonprofit Quarterly*, and *Nonprofit Times*. Also attending issue briefings and community events can keep you informed about what issues the nonprofit sector is facing. Community calendars like the Community Connections Calendar can plug you in on events going on in the community <http://ccc.localevent.net>.

Volunteer at a nonprofit

Consider volunteering at a nonprofit – either the one you want to work for or one *like* the one you want to work for. Any nonprofit

that would consider hiring you wants to know that you are passionate about the issues and you care about the mission of the organization. Volunteering can be a way to build your skills *and* figure out what you are passionate about. Having your foot in the door at an nonprofit organization as a volunteer can make getting a job in a nonprofit much easier. It also lead to opportunities such as serving on a nonprofit board or committee. Working on a board or committee in a nonprofit can be a great way to build skills in the nonprofit sector. Many small to mid-sized organizations have opportunities for community members to get involved on their board or committees, and if you have experience with and care about the mission of the organization, you can prove to be a great asset to the organization.

- For volunteer opportunities, call HandsOn Twin Cities at 612-379-4900 or visit www.handsonwincities.org
- Action Without Borders at www.idealists.org also has a listing of local volunteer opportunities, links to resources, and tips on things like how to use your volunteer experience on your resume.
- For more information about what it means to be on a nonprofit board visit www.boardsource.org.
- The YWCA Leadership Registry does matching of organizations with community members interested in serving on nonprofit boards. Visit www.ywcampls.org/community-programs/registry/index.asp for more information.