

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Office of Career Services

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CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT

Description of the Field

There are nearly 1.4 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. The nonprofit'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 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 12.5 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 to high \$20's to the mid \$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.

Nonprofit employment by sector includes 41.9% for health services, 21.9% for education/research, 18.3% for social and legal services, 11.8% for religious organizations, 3.9% for civic, social, and fraternal organizations, 1.9% for arts and culture, and 0.3% for foundations (The Foundation Center <http://foundationcenter.org/>).

Demand

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.

Qualifications Necessary 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 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.
- ✓ Overseas experience and proficiency in a foreign language for international nonprofit organizations.

Sample Group of Employers

- Academy for Educational Development <http://www.aed.org>
- American Forum for Global Education <http://www.globaled.org>
- American Red Cross <http://www.redcross.org>
- CARE <http://www.care.org>
- Committee to Protect Journalists <http://www.cpj.org>
- Easter Seals www.easter-seals.org
- Ford Foundation www.fordfound.org
- For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology <http://www.usfirst.org>
- Meridian International Center <http://www.meridian.org>
- NAFSA – Association of International Educators <http://www.nafsa.org>
- National Organization for Women <http://www.now.org>
- Soros Foundation <http://www.soros.org>
- The United Way <http://national.unitedway.org>
- World Vision <http://www.worldvision.org>

Future Challenges of the Profession

The nonprofit sector is a major structural and economic force in the domestic United States and overseas. Nonprofit organizations face challenges of mission definition, relations with government and the private sector, governance, financial viability, tax status, operations, program management, program delivery, effectiveness, and funding.

Resources for Additional Information

Associations

- American Association of Grant Professionals - <http://www.grantprofessionals.org>
- American Society for Public Administration - <http://www.aspanet.org>
- Association of Fundraising Professionals - <http://www.afpnet.org>
- Association of Professional Researchers for Advancement - <http://www.aprahome.org>
- Independent Sector - <http://www.independentsector.org>
- National Association of Planning Councils - <http://www.communityplanning.org>

Internet Resources

- Alliance for Nonprofit Management - <http://www.allianceonline.org>
- Chronicle of Philanthropy - <http://philanthropy.com/jobs.dir/jobsmain.htm>
- Community Career Center - <http://nonprofitjobs.org>
- Feminist Majority Foundation - <http://www.feminist.org/911/jobs/911jobs.asp>
- Foundation Center - <http://fdncenter.org>
- Idealist.org - <http://www.idealists.org>
- Institute for Global Communications - <http://www.igc.org>
- Moving Ideas Network - <http://movingideas.org>
- National Center on Nonprofit Enterprise - <http://www.nationalcne.org>
- Network for Good - <http://www.networkforgood.org>

- Non-Profit Career Network <http://www.nonprofitcareer.com>
- Non-Profit Oyster <http://www.nonprofitoyster.com>
- Opportunity Knocks <http://www.opportunityknocks.org>

Publications

- *A Guide to Careers in Community Development* by Paul C. Brophy and Alice Shabecoff, Island Press, 2001.
- *From Making a Profit to Making a Difference: How to Launch Your New Career in Nonprofits*, by Richard M. King, Planning Communications, 2000.
- *Good Works: A Guide to Careers in Social Change* by Donna Colvin and Ralph Nadir, editors, 1994.
- *Making a Living While Making a Difference* by Melissa Everett, New Society Publishers, 1999.
- *Nonprofits Job Finder: Where the Jobs Are in Charities and Nonprofits* by Daniel Lauber and Jennifer Atkin, Planning/Communications, 2006.
- *The Harvard Business School Guide to Careers in the Nonprofit Sector*, by Stephanie Lowell, Harvard Business School Press, 2000.