

Minnesota Nonprofit Job Seeker Guide

About the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

Established in 1987, the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) is a membership organization with nearly 2,000 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 technology, we help Minnesota nonprofits plug into the resources they need through our directories, reports, and website.

Education and Training Programs

Each year MCN offers many 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 (toll-free at 800-289-1904) or visit our website at www.minnesotanonprofits.org.

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Minnesota Nonprofit Job Seeker Guide

The labor force in the United States works for one of three sectors of our economy: government, business 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:

- 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 Minnesota

Nonprofits are also a large and significant part of Minnesota's economy. For the most recent year in which data is available, 2009, nonprofits in Minnesota reported nearly \$36.4 billion in expenditures and held more than \$59.2 billion in assets. The nonprofit sector also employs many people in Minnesota. As of 2009, nonprofits in this state provided nearly 290,000 jobs, employing one out of every nine workers in the state. The sector paid nearly \$13.2 billion in wages. *This data is available in the 2010 Nonprofit Economy Report at www.minnesotanonprofits.org in the Research section.*

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.

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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, desk-top 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.

Some nonprofit jobs are flexible in terms of their education and work experience requirements. As a result 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.

What are Salaries and Benefits Like 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

The average weekly wage in the state's nonprofit sector is nearly equal that of the state wage and not far behind that of the for-profit sector. In constant 2009 dollars, nonprofit average weekly wages were \$870, government average weekly wages were \$846, and the for-profit sector was \$879.

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.

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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 *2010 Minnesota Nonprofit Salary and Benefits Survey*, published by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits.

Development Associate **\$37,232 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 **\$36,046 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 nonsupervisory position. Typical Requirements: Bachelor's degree or equivalent plus one to three years of experience.

Program Assistant **\$28,122 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 nonsupervisory position. Typical Requirements: Associate's degree plus four years of related experience or Bachelor's degree or equivalent with no previous experience.

Administrative Assistant **\$33,093 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 record keeping, 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.

Accounting Clerk **\$35,963 per year**

Maintains one or more financial systems. Includes processing accounts payable, accounts receivable, and/or payroll and their associated records. Corresponds with vendors and customers via mail or telephone. Assists in preparing financial statements and reports.

Communications Assistant **\$37,440 per year**

Helps to implement the organization's public relations and marketing plan. Coordinates the organization's printed materials (including annual reports, newsletters and brochures) by developing and editing content, designing and layout out the piece and working with the printer and its prepress department. May also help with activities related to media relations, donor communications and Web presence. Works under the supervision of the Public Relations and Marketing Director or other member of the management staff.

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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.

Executive Director **\$79,997 per year**

Provides overall management, planning, and leadership of the organization. Reports directly to the Board of Directors. Works with the Board and Committees to establish policies and programs and administers such programs. Interprets the organization's purpose and programs to outside organizations and the public. Develops and administers standards and procedures related to human resources (including staff development), budget, and physical facilities. Prepares, distributes, and maintains a variety of reports. May direct or coordinate fundraising. Typical Requirements: Master's degree plus five to seven years of related management experience.

Public Relations/Communications Director **\$57,595 per year**

Designs, develops, and implements the communications and public relations program to build awareness of the organization's mission, programs, and achievements. Manages and coordinates all media relations, special community events, and external publications. Represents the organization at public events. May also develop and maintain the organization's web site, in addition to the major responsibilities listed. Typical Requirements: Bachelor's degree or equivalent plus three to five years of related experience.

Development Director **\$66,851 per year**

Works closely with the Executive Director and the Board of Directors to develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy to expand philanthropic support for the organization. Manages all components of the fundraising plans including (but not limited to): annual giving, planned giving, corporate and foundation grants, major individual and corporate gifts, and special fundraising events. Manages (either directly or indirectly) all staff members of the development department. Typical Requirements: Bachelor's degree or equivalent with additional professional development training in fund raising plus three to seven years of fund development experience.

Program Director **\$59,842 per year**

Manages all programs related to the organization's mission and either directly or indirectly manages all program staff. Analyzes community needs to develop new programs and enhance current programs. Directs selection and training of staff and volunteer workers. Assigns work and evaluates performance of staff members. Assists staff through individual and group meetings to analyze specific programs, understand program development, and increase use of individual skills. Interprets the organization's programs and services to the community. Develops and manages the organization's total program budget. Typical Requirements: Bachelor's degree or equivalent (Master's degree or equivalent preferred) plus three to five years of program related experience.

Public Policy Director **\$63,336 per year**

Sets legislative priorities for the organization. Contacts and confers with members of the legislature and other elected and appointed officials to persuade them to support public policies consistent with the organization's priorities. Analyzes proposed legislation to determine the possible impact on the organization and/or its constituencies. Contacts individuals and organizations with similar interests to encourage them to participate in direct and grassroots lobbying efforts. Directly or indirectly manages the public policy staff. Typical Requirements: Bachelor's degree or equivalent (Master's degree or law degree preferred) plus five to seven years of experience.

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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 *2010 Minnesota Nonprofit Salary and Benefits Survey*.

Health Insurance

- 81.1% of nonprofits offer medical insurance to their full-time employees.

Retirement/Savings Plans

- 82.8% 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, 53.8% of nonprofits offer full-time employees separate vacation days and sick days.
- On average, after one year, employees receive 12 vacation days and 10 sick days.

2010 Minnesota Nonprofit Salary and Benefits Survey

The *2010 Minnesota Nonprofit Salary and Benefits Survey* summarizes benefits (including medical insurance, retirement plans and paid time off) as well as salaries for the 60 most common nonprofit jobs. This information was compiled from a survey of 537 Minnesota nonprofits representing all nonprofit activity areas, geographic regions of Minnesota, and annual operating budget sizes. For further information on this report or to request an order form, please call the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits at 651-642-1904 or visit their website at www.minnesotanonprofits.org

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Finding 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.
- Always keep gathering new skills and knowledge.

Researching Interesting Nonprofits

Another job search strategy is to decide the types of nonprofits that interest you, find some organizations working in that area, and research those organizations. It should not be difficult to gather information on individual organizations. Once you have done your research, set up some informational interviews. Your background research on the organization will prove you are familiar with the organization and that you are truly interested in the opportunities available with the organization.

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:

- 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 website at www.guidestar.org.
- Do a search on the Internet and see if you can find the organization's own website.

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:

- Take classes to gain skills either specific to nonprofits or valuable to nonprofits (including grant writing, program development and evaluation, technology, website design and maintenance, newsletters, and desktop publishing). Short one-time classes are available through these and other organizations.
- Consider volunteering at a nonprofit – either the one you want to work for or one like the one you want to work for. For volunteer opportunities, call Hands On Twin Cities at 612-379-4900 or visit www.handsontwincities.org.
- Keep up-to-date on nonprofit issues by subscribing to nonprofit journals and magazines like the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* and *Nonprofit Quarterly*