



**Boston University** School of Management  
Feld Career Center

# Public & Nonprofit



# Careers in Public/Non-Profit

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# Careers in the Public & Nonprofit Sector

## Career Path & Job Information

Careers in the public and non-profit sector can be broken down into fields and functions. Within each field or topic area, there are a variety of functions that one may perform. It should be noted that many positions that MBA graduates obtain will involve a combination of different functions. Graduates can work for a non-profit organization, work independently as a consultant, or for the federal, local or state government. Alternatively, graduates can work for a for-profit company in the area of corporate social responsibility, corporate volunteer programs or corporate philanthropy. These jobs often fall within the Community or Public Affairs Departments.

With five to ten years of experience and an MBA, candidates often move into an Executive Director role at a non-profit organization. However, this depends on the size and nature of the organization, with more experience necessary for larger organizations.

### **Field**

- Advocacy
- Arts
- Community Development
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Education
- Environment
- Government
- Housing
- Human Services
- Non-Profit Consulting
- Philanthropy
- Social Enterprise
- Youth

### **Functions**

- Finance
- Operations/ Program Management
- Marketing
- Program Development/ Project Evaluation
- Community Organizing and Advocacy
- Fundraising

## **Sample Job Titles**

These job titles are associated with the public and non-profit field. Please note that these titles can mean different positions or levels at different organizations, and that this list is only a sample.

- Executive Director
- Chief Financial Officer
- Director of Planned Giving
- Program Director
- Public Relations Coordinator
- Media Relations Coordinator
- Finance Manager
- Director of Administration and Finance
- Director of Operations
- Gifts Officer
- Government and Community Relations Director
- Charitable Giving Manager
- Volunteer Program Coordinator

## **A Look at Nonprofit Career Profiles**

Roles in the nonprofit sector are as diverse as the organizations that hire for them. Learn about some of the roles available at today's most exciting nonprofits and social enterprises.

### **Business Operations**

Finance. Marketing. Facilities Management. These may not be the first words that come to mind when you think about nonprofits, but these are all crucial parts of most nonprofits' ability to succeed.

Similar to corporations and small businesses, nonprofits strive to operate with method and within budget. Since nonprofits are accountable to funders, board members, and the government, their task to run efficient operations, while being able to simultaneously demonstrate measurable outcomes of how they are advancing their mission, is especially important.

Many jobs in nonprofit business operations require a specialized degree, such as a CPA or MBA. Other roles call for hands-on experience in disciplines like communications or sales. These degrees and skills can be some of the most transferable from the corporate to the nonprofit sector, and often prove to be exceptionally rewarding to sector-changers looking to apply their operational skills in a socially driven setting.

## **Community Development Finance**

Do you think careers in nonprofit finance are just about budgets and audits? Think again...

Many nonprofits offer opportunities in finance and accounting that help to build the sector as a whole, such as organizations that specialize in community development finance. Individuals with 5-10 years experience working in finance, banking, or accounting, and those with a higher degree like an MBA, will find ample opportunities to put their skills to good work.

Community development finance institutions provide capital to other nonprofit organizations for mission-critical projects, such as new sites or programs. In addition to financial support, these organizations provide strategic planning and advocacy services.

## **Development Jobs**

Do you love to talk (or write) a blue streak? Are you looking to put your sales, marketing, or business background to good use? Then a career in nonprofit development may be for you.

At most nonprofits, development roles focus on soft skills, such as communication and interpersonal relationships. Hard skills, such as fundraising database management, can be learned on the job. Development is one of the easiest roles to transition into from any other field, such general management, sales, or even real estate.

Development is the single biggest area of the sector where demand out-paces the supply of good people. There are a lot of jobs out there and they are often amongst the highest paying positions at a given organization.

## **Program Management Jobs**

Nonprofit program managers carry out the mission-critical work of the organization. Whether providing programs in such fields as education, healthcare, or disaster relief, program management staff works directly with the community served by an organization.

Careers in program management require excellent people and organizational skills, as well as a strong connection to the organization's mission. As all nonprofit programs are different, specific responsibilities vary. General responsibilities may include managing volunteers or other staff, promoting the program to the local community, and making sure that program activities support the strategic vision of the organization.

## **Careers in Social Enterprise**

There are over 1.5 million organizations that make up the social sector in the United States. Increasingly within the sector, a trend of fast-growing high-impact organizations is emerging: a movement of Socially Entrepreneurial Ventures (SEVs). Bringing opportunistic mindsets and innovative approaches to address social issues, these organizations aim to create deep and sustainable change on the widest scale possible.

In the business world, an entrepreneur is someone with the vision and leadership to identify a market need and respond with a new product or service, ultimately intending to make a profit from the venture. Similar principles are true of social entrepreneurs, with the key differences that SEVs: (1) address a societal need, such as illiteracy; and (2) primarily measure results in social impact value, such as increased literacy rates, in addition to profitability.

## **Necessary Skills & Experience**

### **Employees in non-profits often perform multiple functions**

Candidates must be flexible in the roles they are willing to play. This is especially true at smaller non-profit organizations, where employees are often forced to wear many hats. Leadership roles at small non-profit organizations provide valuable training, because individuals are forced to learn many different aspects of the organization, and essentially “run a small business.”

### **Candidates should be quick learners and self-reliant**

This responsibility forces candidates to be quick learners and self-reliant. For example, someone in operations may find it necessary to take responsibility for certain finance functions, often without the aid of formal training programs. Employees must find innovative ways to learn new skills, as there is no internal department from which to draw expertise.

### **Strong networking skills necessary**

Candidates need strong networking skills to build alliances with other organizations, the government, and the community as a whole. As part of this networking, candidates need to be effective at fundraising. Without this skill, candidates may face more difficulty in climbing the professional ladder.

### **Ability to build relationships valued**

Another skill in demand is the ability to interact effectively with various organizations, such as corporate partners, community groups and governmental organizations. Candidates need to show they can effectively foster ongoing relationships that are essential to the organization’s mission. They need to confidently and succinctly pitch their organization’s ideas to potential customers and contributors. These partners will likely require proof of results, meaning these relationships need to be closely monitored. As part of this relationship-building, candidates should be strong negotiators, communicators, and work well in teams.

### **Understanding of differences between profit and non-profits worlds is useful**

When performing non-profit related roles at for-profit companies, candidates should understand both the for-profit and non-profit mindset. Because the level of formality and bureaucracy may differ between the two, those individuals familiar with both environments are highly valued.

### **Business skills help non-profits fulfill their mission**

MBA's also add value to organizations because they possess certain business skills that are lacking in some non-profit organizations. These skills include finance, accounting and marketing. While the organization’s goal may not be maximizing profits, financing is necessary to fulfill the mission. Candidates should also be aware that some rules of business are different for non-profits, such as accounting guidelines. Measuring results is becoming increasingly important in the non-profit world, so strong statistical and quantitative skills are helpful.

### **Strategic planning skills appreciated**

MBA's also need to emphasize their strategic planning skills. One executive noted, organizations in the public and non-profit worlds do not want their employees to “think like a social worker” all the time, but rather, need to understand the larger business context and organizational strategy.

### **Candidates should seek internships or volunteer opportunities**

It is helpful if candidates can point to non-profit professional experience in their past. Without such experience, candidates need to build or draw on some volunteer-type activity. This shows the organization that the student is committed to the non-profit world, and can understand the challenges that are unique in this field. However, some organizations weigh internship and

professional experience in the non-profit field far more heavily than they do volunteer work. Some larger non-profit organizations expect graduates to have professional experience, but smaller non-profits may accept MBAs with a bit less experience

### **Applicant Differentiation**

#### **Non-profits value a candidate's sense of mission**

The sense of mission may be the most important aspect of one's candidacy. Candidates need to show commitment to the cause of the organization, and to the non-profit mission in general. They should develop their own personal story to explain why they believe so strongly in the cause.

#### **Candidates should seek positions through networking and identify advertised positions**

These positions are not typically filled through on-campus recruiting. While networking is important, organizations in the public and non-profit sector tend to advertise their positions more publicly than firms in the private sector, including posting positions online. There are several websites that list openings at non-profit agencies. See below for some of those links.

MBAs without significant non-profit experience may face stiff competition from those with several years of industry experience and a non-management related Masters degree. Those MBAs will need to seek roles that stress their business and quantitative skills, the skills that non-MBA candidates may be lacking to some extent. These positions can exist in financial analysis or program evaluation, in which employees will measure the program's success.

#### **Candidates should do organization research and prepare for case-based interviews**

As for any position, candidates need to dedicate a significant amount of time to interview preparation. Those that are well prepared tend to be more confident in the interview process, and this confidence tends to impress companies and organizations. Hiring managers typically want to be convinced that the candidate is a good fit for the job, and that she will add value to the organization. Candidates should come into the interview having done significant research on the organization and the field in general, and should be prepared for case-based interviews.

### **How to Market Yourself to Nonprofits**

What makes one jobseeker more appealing than another in the eyes of a nonprofit employer? While skills and background certainly play an important role, many hiring managers place just as much emphasis on the fit between an individual's personality and the organizational culture, most directly regarding a candidate's commitment to the group's mission. Being able to present these qualities in a meaningful and professional manner can give you a competitive edge in the hiring process.

The following article explores some proven ways to increase your nonprofit marketability.

#### **Lesson 1: Know Yourself**

Never begin any job search without carefully evaluating your past experience, current goals, and future direction. Map out your skills and abilities. Define your value proposition. Narrow your search. Write down every possible characteristic of your ideal organization and position. Consider how this role fits into a long-term strategy. Talk with friends and peers about your ideas and get their feedback. Your goal is to develop a detailed understanding of yourself, what you want, and how to best represent yourself to hiring managers.

## Lesson 2: Know Your Audience

The next step is to understand your target audience. Begin by gathering as much information as possible about the fields and organizations in which you are interested. When researching, consider questions such as the following: What is important to this organization? What does it value? What concerns its leaders? What are its challenges? What are its strategies?

To gather this information, study the organization's website, read recent press, and research vital statistics on websites such as Guidestar. Keep up on news in the nonprofit sector by reading publications like the NonProfit Times and Philanthropy News Digest. There are also a number of blogs devoted to commenting on happenings within the nonprofit sector. The Nonprofit Blog Exchange is a great place to find out who is blogging about a particular topic, field, or organization. Social networking sites like Change.org can also help you connect with people who share your passion and learn from their experience.

In addition, participating in informational interviews, volunteering, and attending events hosted by organizations of interest are great ways to get to know your target audience first hand. You may even make some great personal connections to help you in your search.

## Lesson 3: Personally Reflect Nonprofit Hiring Values

With a sector that is comprised of over a million organizations in the U.S., nonprofits do not come "one size fits all." It is important to stay mindful of the diverse range of organizations within the sector, and that each nonprofit will have its own set of hiring requirements. There are, however, several common traits that most nonprofits desire:

**Cultural Competence** - Most nonprofits value resourcefulness, flexibility, multi-tasking capacity, self-directed leadership, a "can do" positive attitude, and, above all, passion for a mission. Your job is to learn as much as you can about the organization's culture, decide if it is the right place for you to work, and then mirror back your cultural competency to the hiring manager, demonstrating exactly how your personality is a great fit for their culture. Methods for learning about an organization's culture include general research, informational interviewing with peer organizations, and soaking up as much as you can ascertain during the interview process.

**Commitment to Mission** - Having a personal and meaningful connection to an organization's mission is a hiring requirement of almost every nonprofit organization. It has to go beyond just wanting to "do good" or "help kids." Take some time to figure out the specific reasons why you are interested in a particular organization's work, as well as what skills you have to help further their goals. The most compelling candidates are those who can relate their competencies, experience, and personal connection to the organization's mission.

**Skills and Potential** - Organizations want to meet candidates who not only possess a specific skill set, but also those who have the potential to learn new skills and demonstrate growth in a new position. Before you apply for a position, make a list of your marketable skills and then match them up to the requirements of the job description. If you do not have experience in a given area, think through your comparable or transferable skills.

**Experience** - Requirements for experience vary greatly depending on the nature and level of the position. For all positions, nonprofits seek individuals who have track records of success in similar roles, organizations, and fields. Savvy nonprofits value professional experience that transfers across

sectors and roles, especially management experience – be it managing staff, budgets, projects or just multiple priorities in a given role.

#### **Lesson 4: Make an Impression in the Application Process**

Now that you have researched your target organizations and understand what is important to them, it's time to begin the job application process. In this process, you get three chances to market yourself: in your cover letter, resume, and interview. As previously discussed, organizations seek candidates that personally reflect their hiring values. Remember to illustrate these in each part of your application.

Your first opportunity to share your knowledge of the organization and reflect its values is in the cover letter. Make an impression by explaining your passion for the mission and the reasons behind your passion. Then, explain what makes you an excellent candidate by connecting your skills and experience to information in the job description.

In your resume, focus on information that is valuable to a nonprofit employer, such as accomplishments that highlight sought-after traits like leadership and being a self-starter. If you are new to the nonprofit sector, focus on your transferable skills. For example, you may not have led a letter-writing campaign to raise money in the past, but you have strong writing skills and experience in managing direct mail projects.

The interview is your ultimate opportunity to make a positive impression with the organization. Come prepared with your knowledge of the organization and intelligent questions for the interviewer. Reiterate why you are passionate about the organization's mission. Illustrate your cultural competence by interviewing with high energy, confidence, and a positive attitude.

Marketing yourself to nonprofits requires a diligent approach to unearth information beyond the job description. Taking the time to dig into what an organization does and values, as well as exploring your own personal connection to an organization's work, will pay off in the application process and help you stand out as an excellent, committed, and well-matched candidate.

#### **Recruitment Agencies**

Recruitment agencies that specialize in placing people in nonprofit positions are yet another option, particularly for mid-level and executive positions. Contact the agencies in your region to see whether they are interested in your resume.

Commongood Careers is an innovative search firm that works with social entrepreneurs to streamline the hiring process and secure talent at every level, from support staff through senior managers, and in every functional area (e.g. development, finance, management). We specialize in quickly understanding the unique culture of our client organizations and the competencies required in their open positions, and then finding great candidates for those positions.

The Feld Career Center is partnering with Commongood Careers to offer programs and services to help PNP students determine their career path, devise a job search strategy, deliver strong interviews, and negotiate employment offers. Together, we offer PNP students a menu of training, skill building workshops and coaching to students and alumni.

For jobseekers, Commongood Careers offers centralized access to opportunities at the nation's leading organizations. With far more personal attention than an online job board, Commongood

Careers offers support to jobseekers throughout the entire hiring process, as well as access to career advising services, special events, and a wealth of knowledge about working in the social sector

## **Other Ways of Entering the Nonprofit Sector**

### **Non paid/stipend positions**

There are many organizations, both in the US and around the world that offer one- or two-year programs that include room, board and a monthly stipend. Such programs afford you opportunities that may not be available at the entry level job market might. Specific activities can include teaching in inner cities, and working in community development and environmental conservation.

For those of you with an idea for a project you would like to work on or a study you would like to conduct, a fellowship in public service can provide you with the financial means to carry it through.

Keep in mind that obtaining a fellowship or a long-term volunteer opportunity often involves a longer and more complicated application process than simply applying for a job. Most of these opportunities require you to write essays, go through several interview stages and submit a proposal. Staying informed about deadlines and applications requirements is essential for taking advantage of these programs.

### **When the job search is not going well**

If you've been looking for a job without success, don't get discouraged - try a different route: volunteer with an organization working on the issue that interests you. Remember, the more experience you have, the more desirable a candidate you become for a prospective employer. If you want to volunteer but need to pay the rent, your college loans, and like to go to a movie once in a while, consider finding a short-term job through a temporary employment agency that will fit your schedule.

Also, larger corporations often have a volunteer/philanthropic department. Depending on the industry, you might be able to find nonprofit-like work in a business setting.

You might have to take a job you don't really like while you are looking for your dream job. Don't get discouraged if this happens - even idealists have to pay the bills. No matter what job you end up in, try to take away from the experience as many skills as you can to strengthen your application for your next job. Almost any job can teach you something - how to work better with others, develop your computer skills, or master a new phone system, for example. As long as you know that the job is temporary and you continue to look for work that you want to do, something will eventually come up. Remember not to lose sight of your dream job - don't settle for a job you don't like just because it's safe and brings in some money. Persevere until you find the job you truly want.

## Networking for Jobseekers

Networking is a strategic component of any job search. Studies have shown that networking can be 12 times more effective than answering job advertisements. This is particularly true in the nonprofit sector, where under-resourced hiring managers frequently look to their networks for candidates. As a result, the ability to successfully build and cultivate relationships is a vital part of advancing your career, and in many cases, landing the ideal job.

In jobseeking, there is an old adage: "It's not what you know; it's who you know." Making connections with a targeted set of people can result in the acquisition of new information about a specific type of work, organization, or job opportunity. These connections can further your career, both in your search and after you land the job.

Networking is a social skill. Luckily, we are constantly in social settings that promote networking opportunities. As a general rule, make yourself as visible as possible. Go to every social or professional gathering you can, such as conferences, career fairs, alumni activities, professional association meetings, and fundraisers. Participate in volunteer opportunities at organizations that interest you. You never know when a hiring manager will be volunteering next to you at a soup kitchen or a homebuilding event.

When it comes to building your network, begin with your inner circle and move outwards. Make a list of your family and friends who work in particular fields, organizations, or roles that interest you. Initiate conversations with these immediate connections, and at the end of every meeting, request introductions to at least three of their colleagues. This is how your network grows by degrees -- by connecting with the people who know the people you know.

Beyond your immediate network, conduct research to identify people in positions and/or organizations that interest you. Online resources such as Guidestar and the Foundation Center and sector-related publications like the NonProfit Times and Chronicle of Philanthropy may be helpful to this end. After you conduct your research, create a comprehensive list of people with whom you plan to conduct outreach.

Strong organizational skills are the key to managing the building of your network. Besides contact information, record relevant information for your contacts such as industries, interests, professional associations, and even personal information like birthdays and anniversaries. Organize your network in a contact management system like Outlook. There are also web-based contact management systems like Plaxo that allow you to email the people in your network directly. If you prefer to rely on a hard copy organization system, place business cards in a binder for easy reference.

It's no secret that web sites like MySpace and Friendster are incredibly popular. In the past ten years, online social networking tools have exploded. What started as a way for former classmates to find each other has grown into a widespread forum for anyone to connect with people they already know and people they want to know. Today, there are over 200 social networking sites, many of them devoted to connecting professionals to each other. How can social networking tools like these help you make valuable connections and further your job search?

Professional social networking sites provide great opportunities to make connections. Since this type of networking is done online, there are no restrictions of geography or "being in the right place at the right time." On these sites, jobseekers can create a personal profile, including information about yourself such as what your core competencies are, what kinds of organizations are of interest to you,

and what type(s) of position you are seeking, and then build a network by searching for people by field of interest, organization, position, or any other search criteria. This is especially helpful when trying to connect with someone to whom you may not have a direct connection, as it eliminates the need to know someone in common.

One of the best ways to connect with Boston University alums is through LinkedIn. We have 500+ members in our **BU SMG LinkedIn group**, and as a BU student, you should be part of it!

- If you aren't already in LinkedIn, you need to join on your own. It's free and takes just minutes to set up a profile. Go to [www.Linkedin.com](http://www.Linkedin.com)
- Then, join the BU SMG LinkedIn Group
- Want to learn more about how to maximize your LinkedIn connections? Click [http://www.linkedin.com/static?key=tour\\_flash](http://www.linkedin.com/static?key=tour_flash) for an on-line tutorial.

Another way to network with alums is through **CAN**, the Career Advisory Network. Alums on the Career Advisory Network have agreed to be a resource for students.

To access CAN go to [www.bu.edu/studentlink](http://www.bu.edu/studentlink). Click on the Work tab and then Career Advisory Network. Read "Learn more about searching CAN" and then click "Search for Career Advisors." Login with your *full* BU e-mail address and Kerberos password.

Social networking sites that serve individuals interested in the social sector include 1Bloc and Omidyar Network.

### **Ten Resume Tips for Nonprofit Jobseekers**

The resume is a key part of any job application, and applying for a nonprofit job is no different. The question is, how is writing a resume for a nonprofit job different from writing one for a corporate position and how can you create a resume that effectively markets yourself to a nonprofit audience? This article will provide tips and advice about how to tailor your resume to nonprofit organizations.

#### **Tip #1: Focus on Culture Fit.**

Nonprofits look for different types of information in a resume. Like all organizations or companies, nonprofits look for evidence of relevant skills and experience that will help the candidate to be successful in the position and add value to the company. Nonprofits, though, look beyond specific skills and qualifications; they are particularly interested in how a candidate is going to fit within their unique organizational culture. Therefore, a good nonprofit resume will include key personality traits and a connection to the organization's mission as a first step in demonstrating culture fit.

#### **Tip #2: Opt for a Chronological Resume.**

There are generally two distinct resume formats: functional and chronological. Functional resumes group skills by job function and therefore highlight skills over employment history. Chronological resumes present information using a timeline approach, grouping experience by job title and employer. Chronological resumes are generally the best choice, as they illustrate job growth, are easy to follow, and don't require the reader to hunt for basic information like specific places of employment or dates employed. A resume should clearly and concisely tell your "employment story"; if the story is not clear, the reader will assume that there is something you are trying to hide.

### **Tip #3: Tailor Your Resume to the Position.**

Don't take a one-size-fits-all approach with your resume. Tailor your resume for every job application. This includes mapping your past experience to the specific requirements outlined and using key words and phrases from the job description, as well as addressing unique cultural competencies required by each organization. For example, if the organization values teamwork and collaboration, make sure you include examples from your work history that illustrate these traits. Remember to include relevant or exceptional leadership roles, committee assignments, fundraising, or community involvement activities.

### **Tip #4: Demonstrate Your Connection to the Organization's Mission**

As noted above, nonprofits are looking for evidence of your connection to their mission in all parts of your application. On your resume, be sure to list all past experience, paid or volunteer, that you have with organizations working in a similar mission area. If you don't have any such experience, begin your resume with an objective statement that concisely describes your interest in this area.

### **Tip #5: Use Accessible Language**

In many cases, the person receiving and screening your resume may not be the hiring manager for the position, so craft your resume for a general audience; any reader should be able to look at your resume and have a clear picture of your experience and interests. Avoid jargon or terminology that is not widely recognized. For example, in describing your experience in education, use phrases like "increased 80% of students' reading levels by two grade levels within one school year" instead of referring to state-specific tests such as the MCAS.

### **Tip #6: Quantify and Qualify Your Experience**

As much as possible, use data to show exceptional results, such as specific amounts of funds raised or specific operational efficiencies instituted. When describing management experience, include the number of direct reports. In addition, use examples that will illustrate universally sought cultural competencies like flexibility, teamwork, and leadership.

### **Tip #7: Choose Every Word Carefully**

Your resume is an example of your writing ability, a skill required by almost every role at every nonprofit. Use active language, write in a style that is easy to follow, and avoid including irrelevant information; as you re-read your resume, make sure that every single word is important to the message that you are trying to communicate. Candidates early in their careers should limit their resumes to one page; those with more experience can use two pages, but no resume should be longer

than two pages. In fact, hiring managers will often treat long, wordy resumes as a demonstration of poor writing skills and therefore discount the candidate immediately.

**Tip #8: Keep Your Format Simple**

Do not use excessive fonts, styles, or colors and have a good balance of white space on your resume. Before sending to organizations, send your resume to yourself or other friends and family to see how the formatting transfers across different computers. For example, a resume using a font that isn't recognized by the recipient's computer will never be read.

**Tip #9: Include Current Contact Information**

Be sure to include your current contact information. If you are a graduating student, include your permanent address and a permanent e-mail address. Avoid listing unprofessional email addresses or phone numbers with unprofessional voicemail messages.

**Tip #10: Proofread, Proofread, Proofread!**

Having typos or grammatical errors in your resume is a sure-fire way to ensure that your application ends up in the garbage can. Make sure there are no errors at all; have two or three strong writers review every version of your resume before you send it out.

Taking the time to create a targeted and polished resume can make all the difference in your nonprofit job search. A thoughtful and well-written resume helps a potential nonprofit employer evaluate your application against the qualifications and requirements of the position and decide whether to pursue your candidacy further. It is your job to make sure they have plenty of reasons to invite you for an interview!

**Meeting the Nonprofit: Ten Interviewing Tips**

The job interview can be a stressful experience if you're not prepared. Interviewing in the nonprofit sector is no exception - especially as every organization has its own unique mission, culture, and expectations. That's why the staff at CommonGood Careers has compiled their expert advice to help you put your best foot forward when interviewing with a nonprofit organization.

***Tip #1: Connect with the Mission***

Gone are the days when just wanting to "do good," "give back," and "have a positive impact" were acceptable reasons to pursue work in the nonprofit sector. Today, hiring managers value true commitment; candidates need prove their individual connection to the organizational mission with specificity and demonstrated action. Think about the real reason you are applying to the position and be thoughtful about communicating that. Describing volunteer work or board affiliations can be a great way of illustrating your commitment to a mission.

***Tip #2: Do Your Homework and Prepare Questions***

Many hiring managers base a great deal of their decision-making on the questions a candidate asks during the interview. Come prepared with questions for each of the interviewers with whom you will be meeting. Make sure the questions are ones that will demonstrate the research you have done on the organization/field and showcase your critical thinking skills. "What is your budget?" is a question that a good candidate would already know the answer to after having done some simple on-line

research. A question such as "I recently read that the state is considering cutting its funding for after-school programs. How is your organization prepared to handle this development?" shows that you are up-to-date on developments in the field and have made the connection between something you read and the potential impact on this particular organization.

### ***Tip #3: Practice Responses Ahead of Time***

Hiring managers are smart and savvy people who are trying to uncover every stone. If you are currently employed, they will likely ask why you are interested in leaving your current position. If you are not currently employed, they will likely ask you why you left your last position and what you have been doing since leaving. If you are switching careers or sectors, they will likely ask you about this decision and your motivations. Think ahead about what questions the interviewer(s) might ask you about your career progression, gaps in your resume, and other experiences. Be prepared to answer these questions in a manner that is honest, positive, and forward-looking. Put yourselves in the interviewer's shoes and decide whether your planned responses would seem logical and plausible.

### ***Tip #4: Inquire About the Interview Structure***

Every nonprofit organization will structure their interview processes differently. It is important to get a sense ahead of time about how the interview will work: with whom you will be meeting, how the interview will be structured (one-on-one, panel, case, etc.), and approximately how long it will last. Arrive early, making sure you know exactly where to go and planning enough travel time. Remember that you never know who you are talking to when you arrive; the person behind the reception desk could be the Executive Director or another important decision-maker.

### ***Tip #5: Dress to Impress***

There is a wide variety of dress codes among nonprofit organizations, ranging from jeans to suits. For any interview, unless specifically told otherwise, it is best to dress professionally in a tailored suit or professional separates; it is better to over-dress than to under-dress. Keep everything subtle: perfume/cologne, clothing, makeup, and accessories. If time permits, go to the restroom upon arrival to ensure that you look presentable. If part of the interview includes visiting the program site, for example, you may ask an organizational representative prior to the interview what would be appropriate attire.

### ***Tip #6: Bring the Goods***

Bring at least 2 copies of your resume and cover letter, a list of references, and 2 - 3 work or writing samples. You never know what the interviewer will request. Also, having work samples available can be a good visual to demonstrate your competency in certain areas.

### ***Tip #7: Sell Yourself***

Know exactly why you want this specific position and exactly why you want to work at this specific organization. Be able to outline clearly and concisely the skills, experience, and value that you will bring to the position.

### ***Tip #8: Illustrate a Can-Do Attitude***

While hard skills are very important to nonprofit hiring managers, personality and culture fit are equally, if not more, important. Being positive, smart, articulate, energetic, thoughtful, flexible, and passionate are crucial characteristics in most nonprofit environments, so maintain your confidence and positive attitude. Job searching is difficult but no one wants to hire someone who seems unenthusiastic, demoralized, or defeated. Remember that body language is an important technique for communicating interest and engagement.

### ***Tip #9: Be Discreet About Past Employers***

The nonprofit environment is small and close-knit. It is likely that the person with whom you are interviewing knows one or more of your previous employers or organizations. Be prepared to give thoughtful and professional answers if an interviewer asks you about your experience with a certain person or organization. No one will want to hire someone who criticizes or gossips about former employers, as they will expect that you will do the same to them or their organization.

### ***Tip #10: Highlight Your Flexibility***

Nonprofit hiring managers are very busy and unexpected situations arise frequently. Your reaction to unexpected circumstances will say a lot about how you might handle such circumstances if employed at the organization. At the same time, you want to make sure that you are being treated professionally. If it looks like an interview isn't actually going to happen, or if the hiring manager seems too distracted to have an effective interview, offer to come back at a more convenient time.

### ***Finally: Remember to Follow-up***

Just as many hiring managers decide not to proceed with a candidate because of typos in a cover letter, they also may not proceed with your candidacy if you do not send a thank you note after your interview; this is viewed as a professional courtesy as well as an example of your ability to identify and execute effective follow-up. While hand-written notes are still ideal, email thank-yous have become generally acceptable.

## **Nonprofit Salaries: What Should I Earn?**

A common myth about nonprofit organizations is that salaries are low and can't compare with the corporate world. Depending on your expectations, nonprofit salaries may be more competitive than you think.

Nonprofit organizations are in a tough spot, in that they receive funding in order to meet a mission and there is an implicit expectation that as much of that funding as possible should go directly to programs supporting the mission. However, more and more, funders and nonprofits alike recognize that an organization's effectiveness and ability to meet its mission is dependent upon the quality of its staff, and understand that they can no longer rely on highly qualified people who are willing to work for less than market-rate salaries just for the "feel good" satisfaction. Nonprofit organizations are highly professional workplaces and in order to attract and retain outstanding talent, they need to be competitive with other job opportunities. Therefore, nonprofit salaries are becoming more and more competitive and organizations are paying much more attention to the market rate for compensation. That being said, nonprofits do operate in a resource-constrained environment and need to be very conscientious about the compensation that they offer, both from a budget perspective and from an internal equity perspective.

What does this mean for you, the jobseeker? Salary negotiations are complicated and involve many variables. Some will be individual criteria, such as salary requirements and estimated market value, and some will be organizational criteria, such as budget restrictions, internal equity, and benefits packages. It is important that you understand your own criteria deeply and that you also take into consideration the situation of your prospective employer. This article discusses some guidelines to consider when contemplating compensation negotiations with a nonprofit employer.

To dig deeper into specific nonprofit salary benchmarks, we recommend the following resources:

Guidestar: A free searchable database of over 1.5 million nonprofit organizations, including Form 990 tax return data that documents salary information for the five highest-paid positions at specific organizations. Guidestar also offers a fee-based nonprofit compensation report and salary search tool.

The Nonprofit Times 2005 Salary Survey: Annual special report from major sector publication *The Nonprofit Times*. Provides benchmarks primarily for senior-to-executive management positions across budget size and geographic location.

Professionals for Nonprofits 2006 Salary Survey - New York and Professionals for Nonprofits 2006 Salary Survey - Washington D.C.: These annual surveys of New York City and Washington D.C. nonprofits provide salary ranges in management, finance, fundraising, marketing, programs, and IT across organizations of varying operating budgets.

When developing your compensation requirements, remember that you need to understand both your market value, as described above, and the internal variables that impact an organization's ability to pay (budget, location, internal equity, funding cutbacks, etc.). It is perfectly possible that you determine your market value to be \$60,000, for example, but the organization you really want to work with is only able to pay you \$50,000. You need to consider how you prioritize compensation, opportunity, work environment, reputation, etc.; many people have accepted positions below their market rate because of the amazing opportunities provided.

Increasingly, nonprofits are considering varied types of financial compensation plans, including signing bonuses and performance bonuses. Consider your comfort level with the various financial compensation options. For example, suggesting a performance-based bonus plan to a prospective employer will allow you to demonstrate your confidence in meeting goals, while allowing the organization to minimize risk and you to potentially maximize earnings.

### **Debunking Myths of Nonprofit Jobs**

Think nonprofits are about low pay and inexperienced staff? Think again...

**Myth #1: "I can't afford to work at a nonprofit because their salaries are not competitive."**

The reality is positions in finance, operations, and management generally pay \$50-75k for mid-to-senior roles, and \$75-150k for executive roles.

**Myth #2: "Working at a nonprofit will not challenge me as much as a corporate job."**

Many nonprofits are highly entrepreneurial and growth oriented. Their business challenges are very similar to those of comparable corporations.

**Myth #3: "There aren't really nonprofit jobs for people with business skills or advanced degrees."**

Depending on the organization, most mid-to-senior level staff possesses advanced degrees and extensive business experience, especially in finance, operations, and general management.

**Myth #4: "Nonprofits are disorganized and skimp on operational infrastructure."**

Successful nonprofits view business infrastructure needs, such as technology and management systems, as critical investments.

### **A Sampling of Companies that Recently Hired our PNP Students**

United Way  
YMCA  
EdVestors  
CERES  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Dept. of Environmental Protection  
Red Cross  
Citizens Bank  
Boston Center for the Arts  
Appalachian Mountain Club  
Boys/Girls Club  
Whole Foods  
New Profit, Inc  
City of Boston  
Jump Start  
Starbucks  
Rape Crisis Center  
Planned Parenthood  
Aids Action Committee  
Barr Foundation  
Deloitte Consulting  
Great Boston Food Bank and other food banks  
Centers for Adult Education  
New England Aquarium  
Commonwealth Of Massachusetts  
Rosie's Place  
Common Impact  
Government Accountability Office  
Wang Center for the Arts  
Mass Alliance on Teen Pregnancy  
TIAA-CREF  
Golden Gate Community

### **A Sampling of What PNP Grads Are Doing...**

- Business for Social Responsibility, Director of Community Investment
- Trinity Financial, Project Manager
- Commongood Careers, Co-founder & Vice President
- WGBH, Vice President and General Manager
- Oxfam America, Director of Major Gifts
- Boston Center for the Arts, Controller
- Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Senior Vice President
- Appalachian Mountain Club, Director of Operations

- Executive Office of Health and Human Services, IT Services Chief of Staff
- City of Boston, Technology Advisor to the Mayor of Boston
- Department of Public Health, Assistant Budget Director
- Stonyfield Farms, Brand Manager
- Citizen Schools, Co-Founder and Managing Director
- State Street Global Advisors, Director of Volunteer Management
- Youthbuild USA, Controller
- Nashua Public Library, Director
- Boston Children's Museum, Director of Major Gifts
- Museum of the City of New York, Corporate Relations Officer
- E+Co, Chief Financial Officer
- The Feminist Majority Foundation, Ms. Magazine, Finance and Development Manager
- American Red Cross Portland Chapter, Major Gifts Officer
- Boys & Girls Clubs Boston, Director of Communications
- The Greater Boston Food Bank, Corporate and Foundation Manager
- HalfthePlanet Foundation, Vice President of Operations
- Spark Craft Studios, Founder and CEO
- Associated Grant Makers (AGM), Director of Programs

## **Sample Calendar of Events**

The following is partial listing of career-related events and workshops that we have held in past years. Please check MiTRAC for this year's specific events.

2<sup>nd</sup> Years Internship Presentations  
 Case Interviewing Workshop  
 Intro Meeting combined with finishing up the 2<sup>nd</sup> Years Internship Presentations  
 MBA CareerExpo  
 Careers in Education Lunch & Learn  
 Nail That Interview  
 1st Years Summer Internship Session (Preparing for Finding Your Internship)  
 Careers in Nonprofit Finance & Operations Lunch & Learn  
 Careers in Corporate Social Responsibility Lunch & Learn (Career Conference)  
 Careers in Global Social Enterprise Lunch & Learn

## **Career Resources**

### **MBA-Nonprofit Career Connection**

The FCC has subscribed to the MBA-Nonprofit Connection which is a nonprofit organization that facilitates the placement of business school students and alumni in nonprofit jobs. The FCC wants to ensure that PNP students are aware of hundreds of exciting nonprofit job opportunities. Students must request to be put on the MBA-Nonprofit Connection listserv in order to receive these job postings.

### **General Non-Profit and Corporate Jobs Listings**

<http://www.bridgestar.org>

<http://www.cgcareers.org>

<http://www.deepsweep.com>

<http://www.dotorgjobs.com>

<http://www.idealists.org>

<http://jobsatnonprofits.com>

<http://mnc.nonprofitoffice.com>

<http://www.nonprofitjobs.org>

<http://www.nonprofitjobscoop.org>

<http://nonprofitoyster.com>

<http://www.nptimes.com>

<http://www.opportunityknocks.org>

<http://www.philanthropy.com>

<http://www.pnnonline.org>

### **Arts/Culture**

<http://www.artcareer.net>

<http://www.hireculture.org> (covers Massachusetts only)

### **Environment**

<http://www.ecojobs.com>

<http://www.sustainablebusiness.com/jobs>

### **Foundation and Grantwriting**

<http://www.agmconnect.org>

<http://www.foundationcenter.org>

<http://www.widgb.org>

### **International/Development**

<http://www.fpa.org>

<http://www.devjobsmail.com>

### **Microfinance**

<http://microfinancegateway.org>

<http://home.bellanet.org/partners.php>

<http://microfinance.com>

<http://www.mixmbb.org/en/index.html>

### **Social Responsibility**

<http://www.bsr.org/jobs/csr/index.cfm>

<http://www.csrwire.com>

<http://www.net-impact.org/index.html>

## **INTERNATIONAL NON-PROFIT CAREER RESOURCES**

### **Caucuses**

[www.eurasia.org/jobs](http://www.eurasia.org/jobs)

[www.soros.org/about/careers](http://www.soros.org/about/careers) Open Society Institute

[www.chfinternational.org/section/employment](http://www.chfinternational.org/section/employment)

### **Disaster Response/Refugee Services/Education/Community Development**

[www.goal.ie/jobs](http://www.goal.ie/jobs)

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/res.nsf/doc212?OpenForm>

<http://www.developmentex.com/oppsummary.jsp>

<http://www.usaid.gov/careers>

<http://ri.org/job.php> (Relief International)

[www.mercycorps.org/aboutus.jobs](http://www.mercycorps.org/aboutus.jobs)

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=resources.former.crisiscorps>

### **Environment**

<http://www.conservation.org/xp/CIWEB/about/jobs> (Conservation International)

<http://www.nature.org/careers> (The Nature Conservancy)

[www.wwf.org](http://www.wwf.org)

[www.chfinternational.org/section/employment](http://www.chfinternational.org/section/employment)

<http://www.usaid.gov/careers>

<http://www.developmentex.com/oppsummary.jsp>

### **Public Health / Maternal Health**

<http://jobs.undp.org>

<http://www.psi.org/employment>

<http://www.unicef.org/about/employ/index.html>

<http://www.savethechildren.org/about/jobs/index.html>

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/res.nsf/doc212?OpenForm>

<http://www.developmentex.com/oppsummary.jsp>

<http://www.usaid.gov/careers>

### **Fair Trade**

<http://www.transfairusa.org/content/about/jobs.php>

<http://www.developmentex.com/oppsummary.jsp>

### **Micro Finance**

[http://www.accioninternational.org/involve\\_employment.asp](http://www.accioninternational.org/involve_employment.asp)

<http://www.villagebanking.org/press.htm>

[www.chfinternational.org/section/employment](http://www.chfinternational.org/section/employment)

### **Economic Development**

[http://www.acdivoca.org/acdivoca/portalthub.nsf/id/joinus\\_currentcareerops](http://www.acdivoca.org/acdivoca/portalthub.nsf/id/joinus_currentcareerops)

[www.nathaninc.com](http://www.nathaninc.com)

<http://jobs.undp.org>

[www.chfinternational.org/section/employment](http://www.chfinternational.org/section/employment)

## **A Day in the Life Of**

- Please visit MiTRAC to access the Vault guide to see sample “Day in the Life Of” for public and nonprofit positions.

## **Other Preparation**

Associations/ Clubs

- Public and Nonprofit Management Club

The mission of the PNP Club is to enhance the Public and Nonprofit Management curriculum at the School of Management by:

- Organizing activities outside the classroom to further educate School of Management students about management issues in the public and nonprofit sectors and to increase awareness about the program among both internal and external audiences.
  - Expanding the student/alumni community through social networking and career development activities.
  - Collaborating with the School of Management administration to strengthen the Public and Nonprofit Management Program
- 
- Net Impact  
Net Impact is a national network of emerging business leaders committed to using the power of business to create a better world. The Boston University GSM chapter provides a forum for discussion of issues related to corporate social and environmental responsibility and entrepreneurship through a case competition, speakers from area corporations, and volunteer events.
  - American Association of Grant Professionals (\$75 annual fee)  
<http://www.grantprofessionals.org/Unassigned/membership.htm>
  - Association of Fundraising Professionals (fee to join)  
[http://www.afpnet.org/about\\_afp/what\\_is\\_afp](http://www.afpnet.org/about_afp/what_is_afp)

## **Recruiting Timeframe**

### Full Time:

The recruiting season for full-time jobs begins in September and extends through December, though many students continue their job search well into April and beyond. Students looking for non-traditional and social sector jobs are more likely to find their positions between January-March.

Full time nonprofit job opportunities come later in the year compared to finance, operations, consulting opportunities.

Usually the positions are on a “as needed” basis.

### Internships:

Informational interviews before winter break  
Narrow focus by spring semester  
Target top ten organizations  
Interview/inquire beginning of February  
Follow Up!  
In the nonprofit world, summer starts in June