

**School of International and Public Affairs  
Columbia University  
Office of Career Services**

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**CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN  
NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT**

***Description of Field***

There are nearly 1.3 million nonprofit (voluntary, community-based, functional, or charitable) institutions in the United States alone. This "third sector" of not-for-profit institutions plays an important role in community life and is an integral part of the economic, political, and social structure of our nation. The nonprofit professional or occupational field includes a wide range of private and institutional affiliated (i.e., church-related, university related, etc.) organizations that are involved in human services, cultural programs, health care, educational services, recreation, scientific research, public policy, professional associations, and numerous other activities. The size and diversity of activity of nonprofit organizations have grown dramatically over the past decade as a result of government efforts, at all levels, to "privatize" services and programs. This sector employs approximately 12 million people, expends \$120 billion in annual personnel costs, and represents \$340 billion in total annual budget outlays.

***Typical Entry Level Jobs & Salaries***

For graduates with master's degrees, there are many options. Job/job titles include: Assistant Director, Fund-raising, Program Analyst, Program Director, Program Officer/Associate, Marketing/Research Support, Director, Community Outreach, Finance Director, Director, Information Systems, Director, Public Relations. It is possible to be hired as an Executive Director in small organizations. Salary levels range from \$25,000 to \$40,000 at entry level depending on size of organizational budget, number of staff, and diversity of qualifications. There are generally excellent career growth opportunities within larger institutions; however, advancement in smaller organizations may require a willingness to move to other organizations for increasing responsibilities and related financial incentives.

Following initial responsibilities at 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 Boards of Directors, public and community groups, fund-raising, media, clients or interests served and with other nonprofit associates. Career advancement involves assumption of expanded duties with vertical mobility, collateral opportunities, or a move to a related organization with larger budget, program outlays, or diverse program orientation. There are unlimited opportunities with private and public/government sector because of continuous interface with institutions in these areas. A probable career outcome is senior Executive Director, Program Manager, Government Affairs, or equivalent position in the private, public, or nonprofit/association areas.

***Qualifications Necessary to Enter the Field***

- Graduate degree (masters level) from a professional school of Public Administration/Affairs, International Affairs, MBA, or specialized degree in nonprofit management. Frequently, individuals with undergraduate degrees work for nonprofit organizations and complete masters programs on a part-time basis for career mobility and growth.
- Internships during school or volunteer experiences with a nonprofit organization will not only provide practical experience, but are likely to produce important contacts as well. For international nonprofit organizations, previous overseas experience such as Peace Corps and proficiency in a foreign language are often required.
- A strong commitment to the nonprofit, voluntary, charitable or "cause" sector is very important. Knowledge of and a genuine interest in the issues and people involved in the work of the particular organization are also very desirable.

### ***Demand***

This is an expanding and dynamic career field characterized by the growth of new organizations spawned by government legislative initiatives, new areas/programs identified to improve the human condition by newly formed special interests groups, and "non-profitization" of previously managed government programs at federal, state and local levels. In addition, there is considerable turnover based on upward mobility and challenges of this profession.

### ***Sample Group of Employers***

ABRAXAS Foundation	Harlem Third World Trade Institute
American Association of Retired Persons	High Technology Council, Inc.
The American Forum for Global Education	Industrial Development Associations
American Red Cross	Institute of International Education
CARE	National Organization for Women
Cleveland Cultural Trust	Scouts of America
Committee to Protect Journalists	Soros Foundation
Community Associations	The United Way
Easter Seals	World Vision
Fashion Export New York (FIT)	
Fund for Free Expression	

### ***Future Challenges of the Profession***

The nonprofit sector (also referred to as Non-Government Organizations-NGOs or Private Volunteer Organizations-PVOs) are a major structural and economic force in the domestic US and overseas. They face challenges of mission definition, relations with government and the private for-profit sector, governance, financial viability, tax status, operations, program management, program delivery, effectiveness, credibility with the public, and funding.

### ***To Get More Information***

The American Society for Public Administration, 1120 - G Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20005-2885. Telephone (202) 393-7878  
The Independent Sector, 1828 L Street, NW, Suite 1200, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 223-8100.

Other sources of reference include:

Smith, Devon Cottrell, *The Fourth of July Resource Guide*, Garrett Park Press, Garrett Park, MD, 1990.  
Powell, Walter Wea, *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987.  
McAdam, Terry W., *Doing Well by Doing Good*. The Penguin Group, Viking Penguin, Inc., New York, NY, 1986.  
Cohen, Lilly and Young, Dennis R., *Careers for Dreamers and Doers*. The Foundation Center, 1989.

\*For more information, visit: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sipa/OCS/Resources/LINKLS/nongovstlinks.html>.