

Transitioning to the Non-profit sector? Resources for job seekers

Non-profit sector employment is a popular choice for today's job seekers. Working for a cause you believe is the ultimate convergence of professional skills and personal passion. Realistically? In this economy many non-profits relying on public donations are struggling to survive. Like their corporate and government counterparts, they are streamlining staff and trimming operations. Researching non-profits is not difficult. It does, however, require different tools from researching commercial operations. These notes will get you started:

IS IT REALLY A NON-PROFIT?

Sometimes it's difficult to tell by the organization's name if the entity is profit or non-profit. Non-profits are required to apply for official status with the Internal Revenue Service [IRS] and state charities registration bureaus. Every individual local entity is required to file; not just the parent organization. NOTE: nonprofits can be incorporated, (inc.) or include the word Corp. in their title.

Cumulative list of Organizations [IRS]: <http://www.irs.gov/charities/>

NJ Registered Charities [NJ Div. Consumer Affairs] <http://www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/charity/chardir.htm>

WHAT DOES THIS ORGANIZATION REALLY DO?

The organization's web site is the best place to learn about the mission, services, programs, achievements and history.

IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

Identify Non-profits by cause, location, size and rating (animal rights, NJ = 6 organizations)

Charity Navigator (advance search requires free registration): <http://www.charitynavigator.org>

RATINGS & RANKINGS

Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance offers general reports and complaints for selected major US organizations: <http://www.bbb.org/us/charity/>

Charity Navigator (see above) offers grades based on how money is spent.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Non-profit financial data is public information. Organizations are required to file a 990 form with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This document contains consolidated income and expenditure data, including remuneration of top officers. This document is the basis for charity grades (% income spent on program vs administration).

Organization's web site: Many organizations upload 990 forms to their web site.

Foundation Center 990 Finder (includes historic 990s; coverage varies):

<http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/990finder/>

Guidestar <http://www2.guidestar.org/> provides access to current and historic 990 forms, coverage varies. Access to financial data requires (free) registration.

NEWS

National and local magazines and newspapers are excellent sources for researching the non-profit's programs, initiatives, awards, problems, and management changes.

Organization's web: press releases are best source for recent news and management changes.

Article/newspaper databases (EBSCO, ProQuest, NewsBank, dailyrecord.com) offer national and local news.

Databases can be accessed in the library or from home (requires library card): <http://mclib.info/remote.html>

JOB POSTINGS

The two major trade publications for this industry are Nonprofit Times and Chronicle of Philanthropy. Here you will find articles highlighting major issues, trends, and classified ads listing employment opportunities. These jobs are generally for top level administrative positions (executive directors, chief financial officers, fundraising/development managers etc.). Our library subscribes to both publications. You can also access online, including the job ads:

Nonprofit Times: <http://www.nonprofitjobseeker.com/>

Chronicle of Philanthropy: <http://philanthropy.com/section/Jobs/224/>

