



Care to Change the World?

Choosing a career in the nonprofit or government sector

The value of a nonprofit career

Are you first in line to sign up for a charity walk or volunteer drive? Perhaps you've been involved in student government. When you think about your career objectives, is your main goal to make a positive impact on the world? If so, you might want to consider a career in the nonprofit sector. Comprised of organizations such as schools, health and social services firms, political and religious groups, environmental organizations, and art foundations dedicated to making a difference in the community, the nonprofit sector offers a wealth of career options for all fields of study. For those who choose its path, it can be both a challenging and very rewarding career avenue.

Nonprofits: A passion for service

For-profit businesses are focused primarily on generating revenue for the company and its shareholders. Nonprofit businesses, in contrast, allocate their budgets (which include funds from foundations, grants, dues, fees, and donations) toward making the most positive impact on the world. This influence can be related to serving the underprivileged, education, medical research, protecting natural resources, and improving quality of life for the disadvantaged. Nonprofits are not focused on distributing profits to shareholders and tend to reinvest heavily in their specific goals. As a consequence, their budgets can be smaller and employee salaries can be lower.

Networking: A connection of like minds

Choosing to work for a nonprofit is an opportunity to combine your passion to make a difference with the means to do so. Start by volunteering for the nonprofit organization that most interests you. Volunteering is a hands-on way to learn more about the industry, network with professionals, build up your experience for your nonprofit résumé, and test your dedication. To network with nonprofit professionals, attend conferences and other industry events. For example, if you are interested in becoming a health educator, attend a nutrition conference. If politics appeals to you, attend local election events. Nonprofit organizations are full of

people passionate about the groups they work for, so when networking or interviewing with nonprofit professionals, make sure to convey your enthusiasm for their organization and the community they serve.

A wealth of purpose-paved paths

The nonprofit sector offers many of the same career paths as the for-profit sector, and with ample advancement opportunities. Plus, roles at nonprofits are just as varied as the types of nonprofit organizations themselves, and careers include administrative, finance, operations, law, and medicine. For example, you could manage event planning for a trade organization, handle the accounting for a hospital, head up public relations at a museum, or serve as director at a youth shelter.

Government: The public good

If making a difference in your community interests you, a career in the government can be a great choice. In 2013, over 21 million people worked for the U.S. government, with over 2 million on the federal and over 19 million on the state level (U.S. Census data). Plenty of career options exist in public service, from local firefighting and law enforcement to law and policy making. As a government employee, you can make an impact on how legislation is put into place or carried out. As with nonprofit organizations, government jobs can have lower salaries than their for-profit counterparts and can be politicized. This means that some positions are dependent on the election cycle and the political party in power.

Still, nonprofit and government jobs offer many of the same career paths and rewards as the for-profit sector. If you're interested in a job where you can combine your talents and experience while helping others, consider a nonprofit. Energize your career with enthusiasm and help change the world!



i n a nutshell:

A nonprofit career is hearts and hands working together to make a world of difference:

- **Nonprofits are driven by purpose and the desire to make a positive impact**
- **Nonprofit roles are plentiful, but salaries may be less than those in for-profit sectors**
- **Opportunities exist for just about all majors in both private and public sectors**
- **Volunteer first to test your commitment and to gain hands-on experience**
- **Some public service jobs are politically dependent**

According Gary White, founder of Water.org., let your life “be an intersection of your greatest passion and the world’s greatest needs.”