

# More People Want Jobs With Meaning

## The Buzz

**Nonprofit organizations are unique. They don't exist to make money, and they rarely pay taxes. Generally, these organizations exist to help people or support a cause. And millions of people in the U.S. and Canada prefer to work for one.**

Nonprofits hire people from a wide variety of fields. You can get a paid job with a nonprofit as anything from a fund-raiser to a construction worker, from a communication director to a technology worker. The latter is particularly in demand.

### Nonprofit Tech Workers Wanted

Many nonprofits are having a hard time finding qualified technology workers willing to work for less money. That's because for-profit companies are offering salaries that most charities can't afford.

An article in the Chronicle of Philanthropy says that some organizations have increased their pay for technology workers. Others are trying creative and less expensive ways to recruit tech workers.

For example, they are giving cash bonuses to workers who refer friends for jobs. They are increasing resources for professional development. Some organizations are establishing casual dress policies or offering flexible work schedules.

Doug Jamieson is president, CEO and webmaster of Charity Village. That's a Web site for nonprofit organizations.

Jamieson has been in communications and technology for more than 30 years. He wants to help nonprofits understand the Internet and use it to help their cause.

Jamieson says that nonprofits increasingly need information technology staff and consultants. Specifically, they need employees who can put together and maintain all kinds of information systems. This would help nonprofits communicate within their organizations and to the outside world.

Jamieson recognized early on that the Internet held opportunity for nonprofits. He created his company in 1995, when the Internet was just starting to become a major communications medium.

He thought the Internet seemed ideally suited for charities and nonprofit organizations. That's because the Net is cost-effective and can reach many people. Most charities don't have much money, but need to reach many people.

At that time, there wasn't much available online for nonprofits, he says.

"So I conceived CharityVillage.com as an online resource center...hoping that it would fill a need," says Jamieson. "Our online career center quickly became a popular feature."

Now that the Web has become mainstream, his Web site "has become enormously popular with staffers, managers, volunteers and donors."

### Meaningful Work

Dan Kessler is a graduate of Duke University. He received a fellowship from the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy. Philanthropy means "loving mankind" or helping people through charity. He is now the college outreach coordinator for Idealist.org.

Idealist.org is a Web site project of Action Without Borders. The site links volunteers, interns and employees with thousands of nonprofit organizations in countries around the world.

"Like many students, I knew that I wanted to do something that I deemed meaningful, but found it extremely challenging to find these opportunities," says Kessler.

By contrast, Kessler says that his friends who wanted for-profit jobs "seemed to have every resource at their fingertips for finding the right job." He thought a lot about how to make it easier for young people to find a job working for social change.

"This led me to Idealist.org, which I had already been using for some time to learn about volunteering, internships and job openings with nonprofit organizations all over the world," he says.

"The organization was also interested in raising the profile of the nonprofit sector for young people, and [they] hired me...to work on just this issue."

### Top Fund-Raisers and Managers in Demand

Other trends are developing in the nonprofit sector.

"There is an extremely high demand for experienced fund-raisers," says Jamieson. That's because government has reduced support to nonprofits. Now, nonprofits need even better fund-raising programs.

Jamieson notes that executive directors with good management skills and solid experience are also in short supply.

"The sector is becoming much more sophisticated with regard to its management requirements," he says. But top managers tend to go into the private sector, where career opportunities and salaries are usually more attractive.

Overall, the nonprofit sector offers lower salaries and fewer opportunities for career growth and advancement, says Jamieson. Managers and staff are expected to wear several hats. They are also expected to work extended hours without compensation and take days off as vacation time instead of additional pay.

"The trade-off is the knowledge that one is making a difference in the community, performing important tasks that otherwise would not get done [and] contributing to a better society every day," says Jamieson. This knowledge has great value to many people.

Kessler says that young people starting their careers in the nonprofit sector have many opportunities. This is mainly because of high turnover in entry- to mid-level positions.

However, Kessler also notes that it might become more difficult to enter the nonprofit sector given the state of the economy and other factors.

Still, people who choose to work for a nonprofit have a wide variety of organizations to look into.

"Just as some businesses are better to work for than others, some nonprofits are better to work for than others," says Kessler.

"Nonprofit organizations vary so widely in size, scope, style and mission. Consider that Harvard University and your local food bank are both nonprofit organizations. The advantages and disadvantages of working for either of these places would be very different," says Kessler.

"The real challenge is finding a job that matches your skills, with an effective, well-run organization whose mission compels you," Kessler says. "This is not an easy task, but can give a sense of purpose and meaning to your life which so many of us seem to be striving for."

Links

**Idealist.org**

Explore nonprofit news, jobs and volunteer opportunities

<http://www.idealists.org/>

**Helping Charity Work**

An article detailing paid job opportunities in nonprofits

<http://stats.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2001/Summer/art02.pdf>

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**Chronicle of Philanthropy**

Check out the career network

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