

TIPS FOR TRANSITIONING INTO THE NONPROFIT SECTOR



Summary: If you are looking to transfer from the for-profit sector or want to start right away in the nonprofit sector out of college then here are some tips to make it easier to get started.

There are several categories of the nonprofit sector that you can end up working in. You will find grassroots, start-ups, in transition, corporate style, steady/stable, in-decline, and founder-led types of nonprofits. The industry with the most nonprofit organizations is health. The most common and needed job functions are program management, program evaluation, fundraising, policy/advocacy, and executive director. The skills nonprofit organizations are looking for are accounting, human resources, operations, communications, public relations, and marketing. Use these seven tips to help you **transition into the nonprofit sector**.

1. Pick a specific area/industry to focus on. There are over 1.4 million nonprofit agencies, so you have to narrow things down based on location, what you are really interested in, or the mission of the organization.
2. Understand the needs of the industry. Working in the nonprofit sector can be challenging and is **never a secure job**. You need several marketable skills and be able to show you are willing to do the hard work that the job may demand by yourself.
3. Pinpoint any applicable skills to be used on your resume. Leadership is very important for nonprofits because you have to be able to lead a small team in accomplishing big goals. If you feel that you are lacking some needed skills then work towards **acquiring them through volunteering** first.
4. Gain valuable experience. The appropriate Bachelor degree or even Master's degree will make a big difference in getting the job and how well you can do the job.
5. Know the lingo. Nonprofits use words like organizations, generate revenue, advocate for, achieve impact, serve community members, and rely upon volunteers.
6. **Use your network**. Take advantage of any alumni associations, neighborhood coalitions, sports teams, political campaigns, local music ensembles, volunteering, or religious affiliations you belong to.
7. Don't abandon what benefits matter to you. If having a maximum number of hours you are required to work each week is important for you then don't take a job that often requires 60+ hour weeks. Other factors of importance may be salary, office atmosphere, or health benefits.

Photo: nonprofitadvisor.org