

# Groupmakers and grantmakers:

## Jobs in advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations

by Tamara Dillon

Uniting people isn't always easy. It takes work to form and support the groups that advocate for causes, pursue hobbies, gather money, or advance professions. And more than a million people make a career out of that work.

Thousands of organizations exist primarily to serve groups and communities. Some of these organizations, such as scouting clubs and athletic clubs, bring people together for fun and self-improvement. Others try to advance a particular political or social viewpoint. Still others help businesses or workers pursue their economic interests. And some organizations raise and distribute money, in the form of grants, to other organizations.

Nearly all of these organizations are part of the nonprofit sector. "Nonprofits," as these organizations are sometimes called, are not established with the goal of making money. But they do offer profitable careers.

This industry employs people to perform all types of tasks, from business and communications to computer and clerical. Despite their varied occupations, however, workers in this industry often share a sense of mission and the desire to enhance people's business or social connections.

Keep reading to learn more about advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations and the occupations in them. You'll discover current earnings, working conditions, and industry trends. You'll also learn how to prepare for a career in one of these organizations and find out about the types of training unique to these and other nonprofit careers.

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### Groups and who they serve

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Advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations exist to serve their members. But beyond that similarity, these organizations differ in their overall goals and are categorized accordingly by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

An organization's goal—whether it is to strengthen a social or civic group, raise and distribute money, or advocate interests of businesses, workers, or political parties—greatly affects its work.

### **Business, professional, labor, political, and similar organizations**

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Business, professional, labor, political, and similar organizations—the largest segment of the advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations industry—provided about 423,300 jobs in May 2004, according to BLS data. All of these organizations advance the economic or political interests of their members.

**Business groups.** Business associations further their members' economic interests. Chambers of commerce, for example, work for the economic development of a city or town and the businesses in it. Manufacturers' and trade associations help companies that produce a certain type of product or service. For example, business associations might develop market statistics, conduct research on improvements in the product or service, and publish newsletters, books, and trade journals for their members.

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Sometimes, business groups create marketing campaigns to advance the products or services that their members sell. Some groups also lobby public officials. If an organization's primary task is lobbying, however, the organization is classified as a public relations services firm instead of a business association.

**Professional groups.** Professional organizations pursue many of the same activities that business groups do, but they do them for members of a particular profession or career field. These organizations often sponsor conferences and continuing education classes, administer certification programs and exams, run job banks, produce market research and trade publications, and lobby governments on behalf of the profession.

Many associations also publish career guidance materials for people who are considering joining the profession. This is why the *Quarterly* often lists contact information for these associations.

**Labor groups.** Labor organizations also advocate for workers. Labor organizations or unions negotiate for improvements in the wages, benefits, and working conditions of the people they represent. They organize workers and persuade them to become members of a union and then seek the right to represent them in collective bargaining with their employer.

**Political and other groups.** Political organizations that promote and raise money for national, State, or local political parties and candidates also are included in this segment of the industry.

Two other organizations counted here are athletic associations that regulate or administer various sports leagues and conferences and residents' groups, such as condominium and homeowners' associations, property owners' associations, and tenant associations.

### Civic and social organizations

Civic and social organizations provided about 405,700 jobs in May 2004, according to BLS. These organiza-

tions—which include alumni associations, scouting clubs, hobby clubs, parent-teacher associations, and booster clubs—bring people together to pursue common social or civic interests.

Some of these clubs also operate bars and restaurants for their members, and some provide sports and recreational activities. But an organization that functions primarily as a restaurant or as a provider of a particular recreational activity is counted in another industry. Sports teams, for example, are part of the recreational services industry.

### Social advocacy organizations

The next largest segment of the advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations industry, according to BLS, is social advocacy organizations, which provided about 162,400 jobs in May 2004. These organizations promote a particular cause. They often solicit contributions and offer memberships to support their activities.



*Chambers of commerce work for the economic development of a city or town and the businesses in it.*

There are two major types of social advocacy organizations: Human rights organizations and environment, conservation, and wildlife organizations. Other organizations that promote social causes also are counted here.

**Human rights organizations.** Human rights organizations address issues such as protecting and promoting the constitutional and civil rights of individuals and advocating for people who are suffering from neglect, abuse, or exploitation. They also might promote the interests of specific groups, such as children, women, senior citizens,

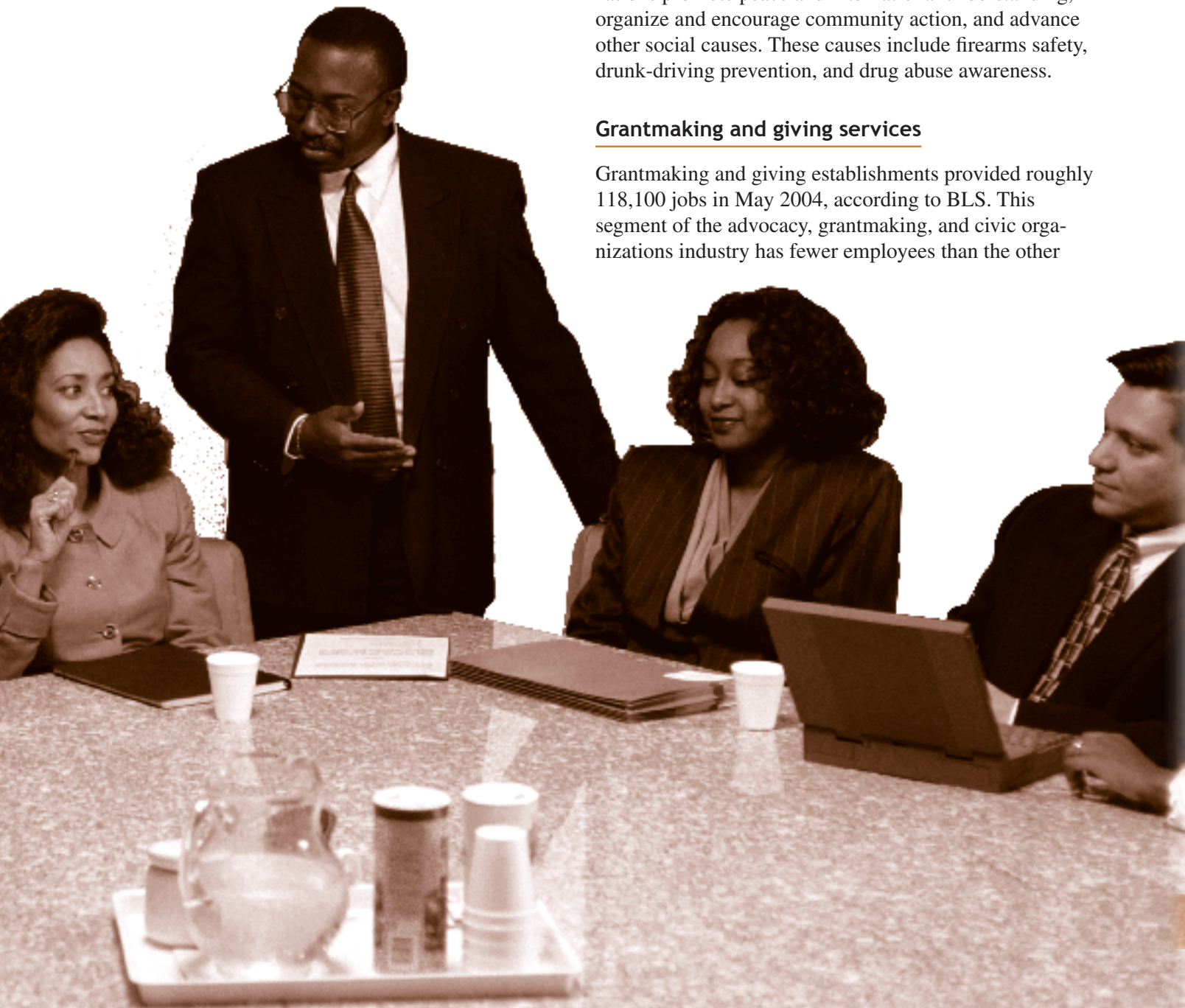
or people with disabilities. Some groups work to improve relations between racial, ethnic, and cultural groups or to promote voter education and registration.

**Environment, conservation, and wildlife organizations.** These organizations promote the preservation and protection of nature. They address issues such as monitoring clean air and water, conserving natural resources, protecting wildlife and endangered species, and protecting pets.

**Other organizations.** Other social advocacy organizations promote peace and international understanding, organize and encourage community action, and advance other social causes. These causes include firearms safety, drunk-driving prevention, and drug abuse awareness.

### Grantmaking and giving services

Grantmaking and giving establishments provided roughly 118,100 jobs in May 2004, according to BLS. This segment of the advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations industry has fewer employees than the other



segments, but it often has the greatest impact on society: grantmaking and giving establishments help other nonprofits by raising or distributing funds.

Included among these employers are foundations that make grants, establishments that raise funds for medical research and health education, and establishments that raise money for a wide range of social welfare activities.

Grantmaking foundations, also called charitable trusts, award grants from trust funds based on a competitive selection process or based on the preferences of the foundation managers and grantors. Other foundations fund a single entity, such as a museum or university.

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## Occupations for groupmakers and grantmakers

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At first glance, the occupations that advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations need are the same as the occupations that other types of employers need. Advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations hire workers for management, business, and communications jobs; counseling, social, and community work; teaching; recreation and restaurant work; and other jobs. In fact, just about every occupation is represented.

This industry does have some unique characteristics, however. The job duties of a particular occupation, such as human resources workers, might be somewhat different in this industry than in others. And some occupations, such as meeting and convention planner, are more common in this industry than in others.

### Management, business, and communications jobs

In this industry, as in others, organizations need managers and business and communications specialists. These include chief executives, communicators, financial operations workers, human resources workers, and social and community service managers.

**Chief executives.** Chief executives' duties vary from one association to another. In a larger association, they might direct a number of other managers, each of whom is responsible for part of the organization's operations, or serve as spokespeople for their organizations to help raise funds. In a small association, executives are likely to direct many or all of these functions themselves and to juggle many responsibilities simultaneously; as the only



*Human resources workers help to recruit and hire workers and to plan for future workforce needs.*

paid employee in very small associations, for example, a chief executive might manage a large staff of volunteers.

**Communicators.** Two other occupations—public relations managers and meeting and convention planners—are at the heart of helping people connect. Public relations managers devise ways to publicize the message of an organization. Some public relations managers develop promotional advertising campaigns and marketing strategies. Some write press releases and newsletters. Others work on political campaigns or in government relations, lobbying officials. Still others specialize in fundraising.

Meeting and convention planners also assist in communicating a group's message. Working primarily in business, professional, labor, political, and similar organizations, planners coordinate the details of trade shows and conventions and other gatherings for the members of their organization. (See the "Meeting and convention planners" article elsewhere in this issue of the *Quarterly*.)

**Financial operations workers.** Larger nonprofits employ a variety of business and financial operations specialists. For example, accountants and auditors handle the financial affairs of an association. They prepare financial statements, records, and reports, including reports to contributors and to the board of directors. Some financial

specialists work as directors of planned giving, helping contributors to draw up complicated trusts or bequests to the organization.

**Human resources workers.** Human resources, training, and labor relations managers and specialists also are common in this industry. Some of these workers, especially those in business and professional organizations, perform the same tasks that their counterparts do in other industries: for example, they help to recruit, hire, and train workers; plan for future workforce needs; and choose or administer pay and benefit plans.

In social advocacy and civic and social organizations, however, some human resources workers have tasks unique to their industry. Many work as volunteer coordinators and focus on recruiting, training, and overseeing volunteers. Others work as labor relations specialists for labor unions, negotiating and interpreting contracts between workers and their employers.

**Social and community service managers.** These managers plan, organize, and coordinate the activities of community organizations; manage community outreach or political organizing campaigns; or manage social workers, health educators, or other professionals involved in providing human services.

### Counseling, social, and community work

Counselors, social workers, social and human services assistants, and other community workers also are employed in this industry. Some organizations in this industry provide direct counseling services to people. For example, a youth group might provide guidance to its members. Other organizations hire social workers and counselors to give advice about new programs or grant dispersion.

In addition to employing social workers and counselors and their assistants, labor unions and advocacy groups hire community organizers and outreach workers to develop community or worker support.

*Many organizations hire vocational and self-enrichment teachers to instruct members in a variety of subjects.*

### Teaching

Many of the organizations in this industry hire teachers and teacher assistants. Professional associations, for example, often offer continuing education programs that are led by vocational or self-enrichment teachers. Social and civic associations also need teachers for courses that they offer to members. These teachers might instruct children or adults in subjects such as cooking, dancing, creative writing, photography, and personal finance.

Teacher assistants provide instructional and clerical support to teachers.

### Recreation and restaurant work

Recreation workers and fitness trainers and aerobics instructors in this industry plan, organize, and direct leisure and athletic activities for their organizations' members. Most of these workers are employed by social and civic organizations.

Many social and civic organizations operate restaurants. As a result, waiters and waitresses, cooks, and bartenders also are common in this industry.



## Other jobs

Other occupations in the advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations industry vary according to each organization's mission. Political scientists conduct research and develop strategies for social advocacy groups, for example, and animal care workers are employed by humane societies.

The industry also consists of many other occupations that are common in most industries. Examples include maintenance and repair workers, who keep buildings, vehicles, and equipment working; janitors and cleaners, who clean organizations' buildings; and security guards, who keep people and property safe.

Many administrative support workers—such as secretaries and administrative assistants and bookkeeping,

accounting, and auditing clerks—also are employed in this industry to help operations run smoothly.

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## Earnings, benefits, and working conditions

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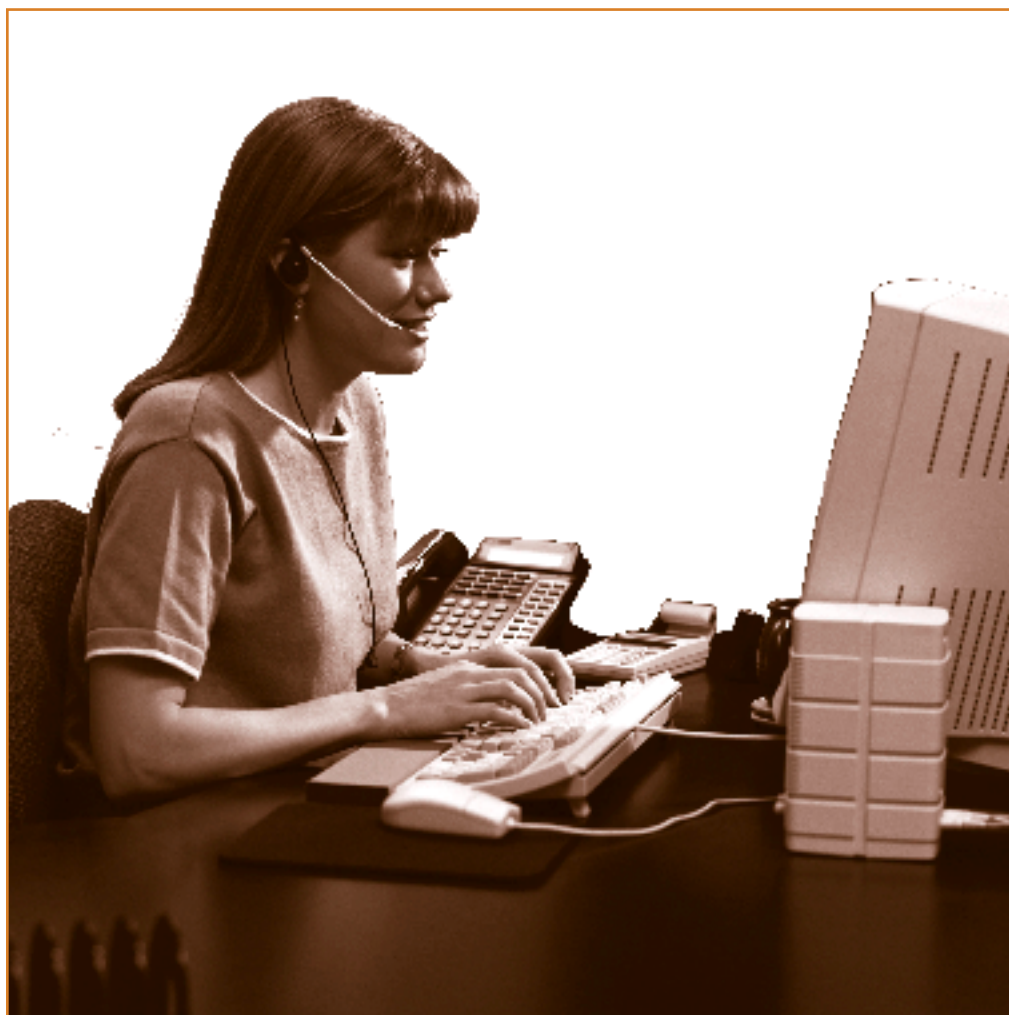
Working in advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations can be profitable, even though most of the employers are nonprofits. Larger, well-established organizations often pay salaries comparable to those of workers doing similar jobs in other industries. In smaller organizations—or in those that have shoestring budgets—salaries are lower, but workers often are motivated to work for the mission as well as the money.

The earnings, benefits, and working conditions in this industry depend on the type of employer and on the occupation.

### Earnings

In May 2004, wage-and-salary workers in business, professional, labor, political, and similar organizations had the highest median earnings: \$16.64 per hour. (Median earnings are the amount at which half of the workers in the organizations made more and half made less.) Earnings for these workers reflect the large size and large proportions of workers in high-paying professional occupations.

Grantmaking and giving organizations offered the next highest median earnings, at \$16.24 per hour. Again, the higher earnings are indicative of the professional occupations common in these organizations.



*Advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations provide jobs in many of the occupations—such as administrative assistants—found in other industries.*

Workers in social advocacy earned a median of \$12.91 an hour, earnings which often are tied to the organizations' size and budgets.

Those working in civic and social organizations earned about \$8.89 an hour at the median. One reason for the lower earnings is that these organizations employ a large number of waiters and waitresses, fitness workers, and other personal service workers. These occupations usually require less training and education than other occupations that pay more.

### **Benefits**

From insurance coverage to educational reimbursement, the benefits offered to employees in most advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations are similar to those offered to workers in other industries.

Long-term disability, extended healthcare, dental, prescription drug, and life insurance coverage often are available, and vision care coverage is becoming more common. Many smaller employers in this industry pay all of the insurance benefit premiums for their employees but none of the coverage for their dependents.

Some organizations offer an automobile allowance for senior managers. Subscriptions to publications and membership dues to professional societies and associations are generally provided for managers at all levels.

Most employers reimburse at least part of the educational expenses for training that is relevant to an employee's job. Some workers also have access to sabbatical leave programs.

### **Working conditions**

In 2004, almost three-fourths of the workers in advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations had a standard 5-day, 40-hour workweek. But flexible schedules and part-time jobs are becoming more common. Top executives and workers responsible for fundraising sometimes travel frequently, often including evenings and weekends, to meet with supporters and potential donors.

Work in this industry is often collaborative; employees confer with each other and with volunteers. In small organizations that have limited budgets, equipment might be outdated and workspace might be cramped. But in larger, better funded establishments, conditions are similar to those in larger for-profit businesses. Many workers

in this industry say that the work environment is positive, in part because they get satisfaction from knowing that their contributions help people and improve their communities.

Fundraising can be highly stressful—and rewarding—because the financial health of an organization depends on fundraising success. In organizations that address social problems, work stress can come from the pressures of dealing with limited resources and with clients who are undergoing personal difficulties. And some workers worry about their jobs disappearing if an organization's funding becomes unstable.

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## **Prospects and trends**

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Job opportunities should be excellent in many advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations between 2002 and 2012. Numerous openings are expected because of the high job turnover associated with relatively low wages in some occupations, because many workers are expected to retire, and because the total number of jobs in this industry is projected to grow.

A growing population, rising incomes, and an increase in leisure time as more people retire are expected to increase memberships in organizations and, in turn, increase the number of workers that the organizations need. Similarly, expanding business activity is projected to lead to creation of additional jobs in business and professional organizations.

Growth also is expected to stem from social and demographic shifts, such as increases in elderly and immigrant populations, that will continue to strengthen the demand for social services. Funding of social services is provided, in part, by grantmaking establishments in this industry.

At the same time, information technology contributes to both the efficiency and success of nonprofit organizations, such as the ones in this industry. Interactive Web sites, e-mail and electronic philanthropy, and electronically generated databases have changed the way in which nonprofits communicate with the public and with donors.

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## **Preparing for groupwork**

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The types of skills required for work in associations vary. But all organizations need people who have strong com-

munication and fundraising skills, both of which enable the groups to mobilize public support for their activities. Creativity and initiative also are important. Particularly in smaller organizations, many workers can take charge and create new programs or events. In addition, basic knowledge of accounting, finance, management, information systems, advertising, and marketing are an advantage for workers entering this industry.

### **Training for nonprofits**

Most workers in advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations have training that is related to their occupation. This training might be specifically related to managing and funding a nonprofit. It might include college degrees and coursework related to an occupation. Or, it might consist mainly of training on the job or as a volunteer.

#### ***Learning to manage, staff, and fund nonprofits.***

The type and extent of college-level training that workers have varies by occupation. Many paid executive directors of large nonprofits have a graduate degree, often in business, public administration, or nonprofit management. Other supervisors, such as social and community service managers, need at least a bachelor's degree.

Numerous programs offer training specific to nonprofit management and fundraising. In 2004, more than 250 colleges and universities offered courses on the management of nonprofit organizations. About 70 schools that offered at least one course for undergraduate credit were affiliated with American Humanics, an alliance of colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations that prepare undergraduates for careers with youth and human service agencies. In addition, fundraising and nonprofit management courses were available as continuing education in more than 50 programs and for no credit in about 70 programs.

Also in 2004, more than 90 master's degree programs, usually in business administration or in public administration, focused on nonprofit or philanthropic studies. More than 100 colleges and universities offered a graduate degree with a concentration in the management of nonprofit organizations; about 40 offered one or two graduate courses in a related subject, usually in financial management and generic nonprofit management.

***Training for other occupations.*** Preparation for other occupations in this industry varies. Prospective workers might need a degree, coursework, experience, or other

training; for other occupations, workers might need to complete on-the-job training after they are hired.

Entry-level accountants and auditors generally need a bachelor's degree in accounting or finance that includes some management coursework or a degree in business administration that includes some accounting coursework. Marketing and public relations jobs often require that entrants have a bachelor's degree plus experience, which is usually gained through an internship.

Social and human service assistants, on the other hand, must have relevant postsecondary training but do not need a bachelor's degree. Increasingly, these workers need a certificate or associate degree in subjects such as social work, human services, gerontology, or one of the social or behavioral sciences.

Knowledge of an organization may be more significant than training in some occupations. Executive directors, for example, sometimes start out in other positions—such as fundraiser, communications director, teacher, or healthcare worker—before moving into top leadership roles. In other occupations, such as self-enrichment teachers, work experience or expertise in the subject area is required.

Some service workers in the nonprofit industry, such as waiters and waitresses and janitors, do not need any formal education and are trained on the job. Others, such as security guards, are required to meet State licensing requirements before they can be hired.

Workers in office and administrative support occupations generally need to have a high school diploma or equivalent. In addition, employers prefer to hire people who have familiarity with computers, good interpersonal and communication skills, and relevant office experience.

### **Volunteering**

A great way to gain skills in this industry is to volunteer. Many employers are looking for helpers and have established volunteer programs. Social advocacy and civic and social associations are especially likely to provide would-be employees the opportunity to volunteer.

Volunteer opportunities are often listed at county libraries, on government Web sites, at school counseling centers, and on local community groups' Web sites and office job boards. Many organizations also welcome walk-in volunteers.



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## To learn more

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If you think that working for groups might be a good career for you, there are many ways to find more information. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, available at many career centers and libraries and online at [www.bls.gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco), has detailed information about many of the occupations common in this industry.

Many libraries also have books, magazines, and trade journals devoted to the nonprofit sector, of which many advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations are a part. These publications often include career profiles and salary surveys.

To learn more about occupations—such as volunteer coordinator, foundation officer, and fundraiser—that are specific to nonprofits, see “Helping charity work: Paid jobs in charitable nonprofits” in the summer 2001 issue of the *Quarterly*. The article is available online at [www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2001/summer/art02.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2001/summer/art02.pdf).

For an article about nonprofit organizations that includes data from the BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, see “Nonprofit organizations: new insights from QCEW data” in the September 2005 issue of the *Monthly Labor Review*. The article is available online at [www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2005/09/art3full.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2005/09/art3full.pdf).

Associations also provide information about careers in this industry, and each of them is also part of the industry. Learn more by contacting the following organizations.

American Society of Association  
Executives  
1575 I St. NW.  
Washington, DC 20005-1103  
Toll-free: 1 (888) 950-ASAE (2723)  
(202) 626-2723  
[www.asaenet.org](http://www.asaenet.org)

Independent Sector  
1200 18th St. NW., Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036-2529  
(202) 467-6100  
[www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org)

The Foundation Center  
79 Fifth Ave.  
New York, NY 10003-3076  
Toll-free: 1 (800) 424-9836  
(212) 620-4230  
[fdncenter.org](http://fdncenter.org)



*Volunteering is a good way to gain  
experience in this industry.*