

# NONPROFIT NEWS

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[New data on nonprofit  
current trends and  
challenges](#)

[Five steps for moving beyond  
land acknowledgement](#)

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## Survivance: active resistance

At MCN's Annual Conference in September, our incredible keynote speaker Dr. Melissa Walls (Anishinaabe) talked about Survivance – coined by White Earth Ojibwe scholar Gerald Vizenor – as active resistance.

Nonprofits bring much needed relief, fill critical gaps, and bring joy to communities. We know what our community needs, but many of the institutions and systems around us are doing what they can to keep us in a constant state of deficit, uncertainty, and fear.

**We are a sector of service, but we should be in service of our communities, not to those with wealth and power most often built off stolen lands on the backs of unpaid and low-paid labor of Black and Brown people in this country.**

I have sat at tables intended to figure out solutions for the nonprofit sector, only to discover that the “solution” is to collect more data and produce more reports to tell us what we already know.

We are told we need more training. We are criticized for having “too much” overhead, as if proper financial oversight, cultivating our staff, strategizing with our boards, and hiring strong leaders are not part of our mission-driven work.

Nonprofits can no longer afford to simply accept the constant inequities under which we have been forced to operate.

**We can't wait for philanthropy and government to do their due diligence so they have the right data that will only tell them what we are seeing right now, every day.**

When we are resource scarce, it is hard to take on anything extra. But consider that public policy, advocacy, lending your voice and expertise, and joining coalitions are all mission critical.

**Decisions that impact us happen all the time without our input, even though we are a sector best suited to represent the needs of our own communities.**

We need Survivance, to collectively take control of systems that impact us and force changes that are designed by and for us, especially centering the needs of our smallest,

least-resourced, rural-based, and community-of-color-serving organizations.

As we name the structures of power and authority, I recognize that MCN is a part of that structure. The hard work to build strong relationships and earn trust continues, and we must constantly evaluate our role as a nonprofit association to recognize that as an institution with certain power and privilege where we need to lead, where we need to step back, and where we can use our platform to amplify voices too often marginalized.

**We all have that responsibility.**

Over the six years that I have been with MCN, I have seen some remarkable progress and examples of collective power. Just a few years ago, to list a salary range on a job posting was unheard of and actively discouraged, but thanks to nonprofit allies, the practice has spread widely in our sector and beyond.



Nonoko Sato

*Executive Director*

Through coalition and partnership, after the 2023 legislative session our policy teams celebrated the passage of paid medical family leave, driver licenses for all, tax credits that alleviate the challenges for low-income children and families, among many other transformative policy changes that directly and positively impact the communities we as nonprofits serve.

We curbed the narrative about fraud in our sector, away from additional regulations into investments to improve existing systems. And recently, MCN convened a group of state agency officials, elected leaders, and nonprofit folks to address equity in state grantmaking.

**The work and solutions are complicated, but together we can collaborate and create true partnerships toward sustainable and long-term solutions that center equity in its policies.**

We ARE stronger together. Let's actively resist and spread joy together.

In community,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nonoko Sato".

## Data to expand your 2024 funding prospects



Lenny Jones

Development Manager

*Which foundations should I approach next year?*

*What's the best way to get dollars from specific foundations?*

*Are there resources that would streamline and amplify my existing process?*

Every autumn, MCN embarks on creating one of its most popular resource pairings to help nonprofits answer these exact questions around revenue projections and fundraising strategy - ***The Minnesota Grants Directory and 2024 Grantmakers event.***

*The Minnesota Grants Directory* features detailed data on over 100 of Minnesota's most active foundations, corporate giving programs, and state agencies.

Freshly updated and bursting with easy-access indexes, this publication collates the most important funder data needed to successfully plan your 2024 strategy, including giving priorities, geographic focus, key staff contacts, and previous grantees.

The directory is available as a fillable and printable PDF, and pre-orders begin December 1. A limited print run of physical copies will also be available; requests will open after the January 15, 2024 launch. Remember - [MCN members receive two free publications a year!](#)

*The Minnesota Grants Directory* release is heralded by MCN's annual **Minnesota Grantmakers 2024, a two-day virtual workshop** - one day focusing on statewide funders, the next on Twin Cities Metro funders and Greater Minnesota funders.

This event is designed for nonprofits across the state to hear well-informed, new external analysis, and critiques from your nonprofit peers. Registration includes access to both days and a free digital copy of the *2024 Minnesota Grants Directory*.

Whether you're an executive director, a board member involved in fundraising, or a fund development staff person, MCN's *2024 Minnesota Grants Directory* and [Minnesota Grantmakers 2024](#) are a great way to expand and enliven your funding prospects next year.



Courtney Gerber

Program Director

## Nonprofits can share important information about powerful income-boosting tax credits

The vital connections to the communities we serve mean Minnesota nonprofits can play a critical role in getting information out to individuals and families about the state's income-boosting tax credits.

Nonprofits are trusted voices that can ensure Minnesotans know about and file for new and expanded tax credits during next year's income tax filing season.

Tax credits like the Child Tax Credit and Working Family Credit mean families have more resources to afford the basics and get their children off to a stronger start in life. For example, eligible families could qualify for up to \$1,750 per child through the Child Tax Credit.

In fact, [the high-impact Child Tax Credit and related Working Family Credit policy changes enacted in 2023](#) could reduce child poverty in Minnesota by about one-third, according to estimates by the Center on Poverty and Social Policy at Columbia University.

Your organization can help spread the word about these important tools to financial security for folks in your community, especially people living with lower incomes and immigrants to Minnesota.

[Feel free to use these resources available from the Minnesota Department of Revenue.](#)

## Current conditions: new Minnesota nonprofit data



Kari Aanestad  
Associate Director

MCN is pleased to release our latest reports on current key trends in Minnesota’s nonprofit sector: [2023 Current Conditions of Minnesota’s Nonprofit Sector and the 2022-23 Minnesota Nonprofit Economy Report](#).

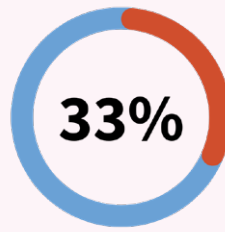
Based on nonprofit feedback, economic reports, and Census data, these reports take an in-depth look at the current wellbeing

of nonprofits and the sector’s impact on Minnesota’s economy. Our goal in collecting and analyzing this data is to provide you with broad context to place your individual situation in perspective for decision-making and communications.

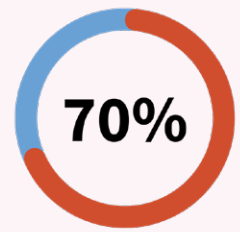
Special thanks to Jon Pratt, senior research fellow, and Grace Hanson and Eleanor Petrin, research interns, for their contributions to these reports.

### Key Findings

- ★ Minnesota wages dropped across all sectors
- ★ Gender pay parity closer in nonprofits than other sectors
- ★ Declines in charitable giving & stimulus funding
- ★ Anticipation of a “financial COVID cliff”
- ★ Struggles to recruit, retain, and competitively compensate staff



Nonprofits that reported **decreased giving** from individuals and foundations, the highest number since the survey began in March 2020.



Nonprofits that **increased their fundraising efforts** as a result of decreased charitable giving.

### ★ Top challenge: Declines in charitable giving and stimulus funding

While increased charitable giving and government stimulus funding made a significant contribution to sustaining nonprofits over the last three years, respondents to the 2023 current conditions survey indicate that these inputs are changing.

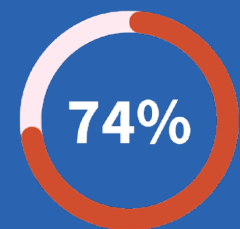
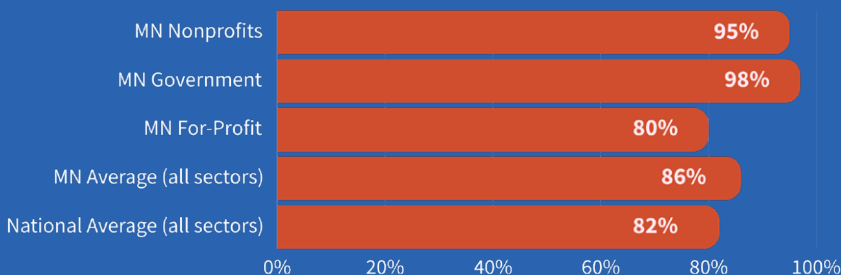
“Individual donors, private foundations, small businesses and corporations, and government funding has decreased significantly, with a smaller pot of money available that can’t possibly meet the growing need within the community.”

Itasca County nonprofit, respondent to MCN’s 2023 Current Conditions Survey.

### ★ New data: Gender pay parity closer in nonprofit sector compared to total workforce

Newly available data reveals insights on pay equity by gender across all three sectors. Overall female nonprofit workers are paid 94.8 percent of their male colleagues, a much smaller gap than Minnesota’s total workforce. Nationwide, females’ median annual wages are 82 percent of their male colleagues’.

Females’ average wages as a percent of males’ average wages

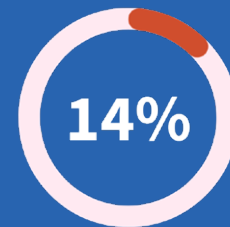
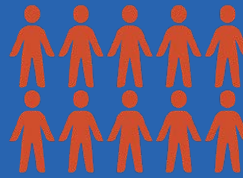


Nonprofit employees who identify as female.

★ Minnesota nonprofit workforce doubles over 30 years, not yet returned to pre-pandemic numbers

The nonprofit sector is a substantial contributor to Minnesota’s economy. While the nonprofit workforce has grown steadily (doubling the number of employees over 30 years), the sector was not immune from the effects of the pandemic.

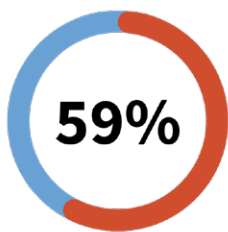
Overall, the number of 2022 Minnesota nonprofit employees was 5,000 workers less than its pre-pandemic height in 2019. Nevertheless, nonprofit employment made the quickest recovery in terms of the number of employees compared to government and for-profit sectors.



Over 9,000 Minnesota nonprofits employ **385,000 workers** who provide essential community services.

Percent of **Minnesota’s workforce** employed by a nonprofit organization.

★ Top challenge: Anticipation of a “financial COVID cliff”



Nonprofits that will experience **financial distress** in less than one year in the current environment.

“The cost of labor has increased significantly while funding has remained stagnant or decreased. This will force our organization to make tough choices on what needs to remain and what can stay to keep the budget balanced.”

Twin Cities nonprofit, respondent to MCN’s 2023 Current Conditions Survey.

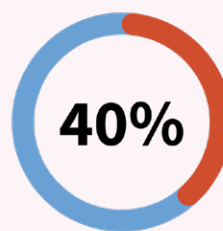
Some nonprofits anticipate or are already experiencing a “financial COVID cliff,” meaning the temporary increases in charitable giving and one-time government stimulus funding are drying up - yet community need for services have increased, leaving nonprofits caught between increased expenses and potential shortfalls in revenue.

★ Top challenge: Recruiting, retaining, and competitively compensating staff

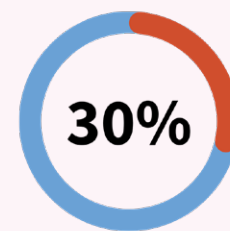
Nonprofits identified meeting workers’ expectations for wages and finding staff with desired skills as the biggest staffing challenges.

Shifting revenue and working conditions placed further stress on financials, which impacts their ability to compensate workers.

Nonprofit, government, and for-profit sectors all saw a drop in inflation-adjusted average annual wages from 2021 to 2022. Despite these challenges, nonprofit sector wages dropped by less compared to other sectors.

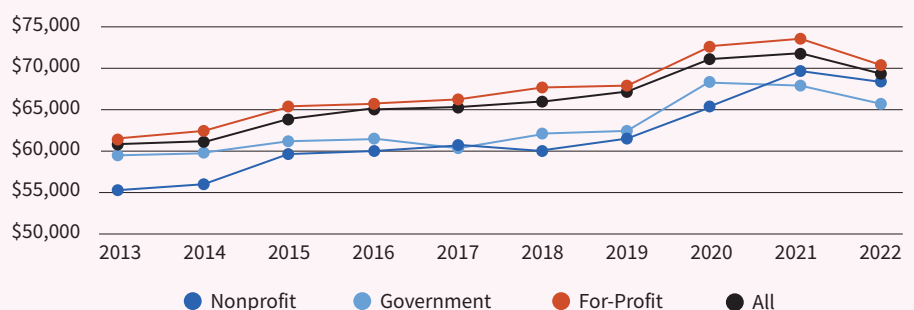


Nonprofits that reported **staff recruitment** as a big challenge.



Nonprofits that reported **staff retention** as a big challenge.

Minnesota average annual wages by sector (excluding hospitals and higher education)



## Nonprofit news & advancements



FamilyWise Services welcomed Nzula Muthoka as Bright Beginnings Family specialist, and eight interns to their team.



Jodi Trost joined the Wayside Recovery Center as chief advancement officer.



The White Bear Center for the Arts announced Chris Scholl as their new executive director.



The Minneapolis Foundation announced the promotion of Jo-Anne Stately to senior vice president of impact and Patrice Relerford to vice president of collective impact and giving.



Ashley Gam joined the Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundation as their new AVP director of investments.



The Blandin Foundation named Jason Edens as advocacy director.



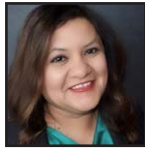
Beth Elstad was named co-executive director of Life House.



Haleigh Sinclair joined MCN's Minnesota Budget Project as research analyst.



Northland Foundation Board of Trustees announced three new members, Elena Foshay with the City of Duluth, Tia Marie a small business owner, and Darren Sheldon of Duluth Public Schools.



Greater Twin Cities United Way announced two new staff members, Shannon Smith Jones as senior vice president of community impact and Sherry Sanchez Tibbetts, J.D. as vice president of diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Chad Bouley joined Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity as its new executive director.



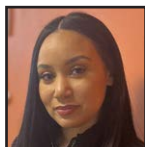
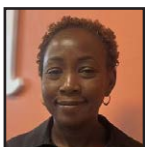
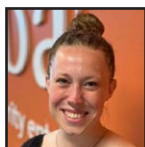
DARTS announced two new staff members, Christian Bourdo as finance manager and Jessie Martinez as Latino/a outreach specialist; DARTS also elected Michelle Engdahl of Thomas Reuters as their new board chair.



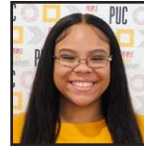
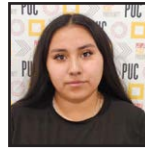
Northfield Union of Youth welcomed a new executive director, Kelli Podracky.



Duluth's Matinee Musicale named Mark Niedermier as their executive director, the organization's first paid staff in its 124-year history.



The Metropolitan Economic Development Association (MEDA) welcomed Marie Ross as loan officer, Emma Schindler as marketing coordinator, Annette Kataria as loan officer, Akalat Theo as loan officer, and Twauna Mullins as supplier development manager.



Pillsbury United Communities welcomed Alul as director of the office of public charter schools, Hannah as Pillsbury House + Theatre special projects liaison, Rachael as Pillsbury House + Theatre production and project manager, Karina as on-call child care aide, and Marli as on-call child care aide.



Feline Rescue hired Kate King, CFRE, as their new executive director.



Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative announced Chris LaTondresse as their new president and CEO.



Can Do Canines welcomed Dorothy Grinolds as their new donor relations officer.



Haiti Outreach welcomed their new executive director, Cealligh Smart.

Jason Bryant joined Vail Place as director of human resources.

### Help us celebrate nonprofit staff and board members!

MCN member organizations are invited to submit your organization's staff and board announcements to [Laura Dunford](#).

Please include their name, title, and photo if available. MCN cannot guarantee that all announcements will make it into *Nonprofit News*.



## Northern Minnesota nonprofit takes mission on the road to end hunger



John Wurm

Membership and  
Communications  
Director

*Each year, nonprofits across Minnesota make incredible contributions to our state's high quality of life. [The Minnesota Nonprofit Mission Awards](#) were created specifically to honor these contributions. Since 1987, MCN has been showcasing the work of Minnesota's outstanding nonprofits through the Nonprofit Mission Awards in the categories of Innovation, Anti-Racism, Advocacy, and Responsive Philanthropy.*

*Voted by MCN member organizations, we are honored to celebrate the 2023 Mission Award recipient for Innovation, [Second Harvest North Central Food Bank](#).*

For more than 30 years, Second Harvest North Central Food Bank's mission has engaged communities in seven North Central Minnesota counties and three Tribal Nations to end hunger – a span of over 11,000 square miles and 209,766 residents. Each year, the organization's staff, volunteers, and partners administer programs that distribute over 4.5 million pounds of food to more than 20,000 people each month, including infants, children of all school ages, young families, retirees and elders.

Addressing rural hunger requires constant innovation and adaptation to work effectively with agencies in a wide range of community contexts, from regional centers of 10,000+ residents to close-knit communities less than 200 people. The COVID pandemic made community contexts exponentially more complex for an agency whose mission is to feed hungry people safely.

Starting in the early, stay-at-home-order days of the pandemic, Second Harvest challenged itself to meet its mission amidst the acute, ongoing health emergency. The organization responded by adding a Pop-Up Pantry program, allowing people in every corner of the region to more easily access food.

Second Harvest staff quickly noticed that Pop-Up Pantry customers came from all walks of life, including a notable

number of working-age men and seniors. Additionally, more than 30 percent of people who have accessed the mobile pantries are seniors, whose fixed income can't stretch when expenses go up so they depend on the food from the Pop-Ups to get by.

The big success of the Pop-Up Pantry program has been that nutritious food has reached small, isolated communities, including several tribal communities, where no hunger relief services existed before.

In March 2023 alone, they served 21 sites in some of the region's smallest communities: Bena (pop 147), Palisade (pop 156), Northome (pop 283) and Onamia (pop 800). Additionally, Second Harvest staff worked closely with the Bois Forte, Leech Lake and Mille Lacs tribal nations to distribute additional food through Pop-Up Pantries in ways that adhered to tribal government COVID guidelines.

By taking their mission to end hunger on the road, Second Harvest North Central Food Bank has brought to life a truly innovative approach to addressing a basic, yet vital, need within their community, all while preserving the dignity of those they serve.



Second Harvest North Central Food Bank's Pop-Up Pantry.

The Minnesota Council was pleased to present the organization with the 2023 Mission Award recipient for Innovation. [Learn more about the Second Harvest North Central Food Bank.](#)

## Five steps for moving beyond land acknowledgment

Has your organization written a land acknowledgment?

These statements recognize the Indigenous past, present, and future of a location. While well-intentioned, land acknowledgments oftentimes have unintended negative consequences.

In response, [we've developed five steps for moving beyond land acknowledgment and toward meaningful action.](#)

### Performative and Burdensome

Before we introduce our action planning process, let's talk about why land acknowledgements can be problematic.

First, it's easy for land acknowledgments to become yet another form of optical allyship. Optical allyship, coined by Latham Thomas, "makes a statement but does not go beneath the surface and is not aimed at breaking away from the systems of power that oppress." Without calls to action and next steps, land acknowledgments are just empty words.

In addition, land acknowledgements can sometimes result in non-Indigenous folks asking Indigenous people for free labor.

When we're unsure and anxious about something, it's easy to impulsively reach out for help before doing our own research. But it's important to put those anxious thoughts aside and spend the time that's required to develop a thoughtful statement. Asking Indigenous people for help on land acknowledgements creates an unfair burden and additional stress.

### The Action Planning Alternative

Because of the challenges associated with land acknowledgment statements, we advocate for creating a land acknowledgment action plan. If you already have a land acknowledgment statement, you can simply add your action plan to your statement; it'll complement the work you've already done.

We developed the following five-step approach to guide individuals and groups through the process of creating meaningful action steps. Action plans feature much of the same information that land acknowledgments do, but they center the all-important next steps.

If you'd like to engage in written reflection on the various action planning steps, visit our resources page and download our "[Beyond Land Acknowledgment Action Planning Worksheet.](#)"

#### *Land Acknowledgement Action Plan*

### #1. Self-Assessment

Before creating an action plan, analyze what you're already doing.

Are any of your current behaviors causing harm to Indian Country? Examples might include appropriating culture, your voting record, how you recreate, or the language you use. If you are doing harm, hold yourself accountable for changing your habits within your action plan.

The worksheet referenced above features key questions for guiding self-reflection for both individuals and groups.

*Native Governance Center is a Native-led nonprofit dedicated to assisting Native nations in strengthening their governance systems and capacity to exercise sovereignty.*

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## #2. Resource Assessment

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After you've assessed your current behaviors, you'll want to consider your resources.

What resources can you provide to support Indigenous people and nations?

Here are a few sample questions:

- Can you set aside money each month for a recurring donation to an Indigenous organization?
- Do you have time to show up to an Indigenous-led protest?
- Do you have land you want to return to Indigenous people, either now or in the future?
- Do you have tickets, admission, tuition, or entry fees that you can give away to Indigenous people?

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## #3. Research

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After completing your assessments, it's time to do some research.

Your research questions will help you better understand what's happening in your area and how you can help.

The below questions can help you start the process:

- What is the Indigenous history of the land I occupy?
- What Native nation is located closest to me?
- What Native-led organizations operate in my area?
- Are there any Native-led events happening near me?

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## #4. Action Step Creation

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Now, it's time to outline specific, measurable action steps to support Native people and nations.

Your steps should make it immediately clear how and when you plan to take action.

For example, perhaps during your research, you identified an honor tax program benefitting a Native nation in your area. And during the resource assessment, you determined you can direct up to \$10/month to an Indigenous-led initiative.

Use this alignment to create an action step.

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## #5. Plan Release and Reflection

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Tell your community that you're committed to supporting Indigenous people. And don't forget to reflect.

Check your progress from time to time. If you've made any life changes that will make it difficult to continue executing your plan as written, restart your self-assessment and resource assessment, and outline new steps that will work for you.

Visit [Native Governance Center's Resource page](#) for additional materials on moving beyond land acknowledgement.

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MAY  
08

JULY  
24

## Nonprofit Fundraising Conference

Heritage Center, Brooklyn Center

## MCN & MCF Joint Annual Conference

RiverCentre, St. Paul

OCT  
10-11