

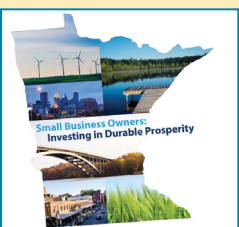
**MINNESOTA  
COUNCIL OF  
NONPROFITS**

# Nonprofit News

Information and connections for Minnesota's nonprofit sector

Spring 2016

The mission of the **Minnesota Council of Nonprofits** is to inform, promote, connect and strengthen individual nonprofits and the nonprofit sector.



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## MCN VISTA Program Continues to Grow

The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits AmeriCorps VISTA program is thrilled to welcome nine new host sites, bringing the total number of sites from ten to 19. After progressing through the most competitive field of applicants in the program's history, the host sites are recruiting VISTA members for the 2016-2017 service year.

Meet our new VISTA host sites:



Our new host sites include the American Indian Family Center, Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation, Casa de Esperanza, Dream of Wild Health, Isuroon, Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota, MIGIZI Communications, Inc., Minnesota African Women's Association and Ujamaa Place.

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## End-of-Year Program Evaluation Results Are In

Every year, MCN hosts dozens of professional training, conferences and networking gatherings across Minnesota. Hosting these events supports MCN's mission to strengthen individual nonprofits and the nonprofit sector as a whole.

In 2015, 5,722 nonprofit staff, managers, board members and allies participated in at least one of MCN's 78 workshops and seven conferences. Many individuals attended more than one training, and hundreds of others attended one of our 89 free networking events across the state.

In order to assess the depth and breadth of our trainings, MCN surveyed all 2015 event attendees. With a 10 percent response rate, the survey results provide valuable information about MCN's impact on the nonprofit sector.

As a result of attending an MCN event, 82 percent of respondents reported changes in their work. For example, 37 percent developed a new relationship, 26 percent improved the way they evaluate and 21 percent developed a new fundraising

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### Nonprofit Bits

#### 2016 Minnesota Nonprofit Salary and Benefits Survey

Every two years, MCN publishes the *Minnesota Nonprofit Salary and Benefits Survey* to help meet the nonprofit sector's need for current and reliable compensation information. As a result of the active participation of nonprofits, MCN is able to produce one of the sector's most valuable resources.

Participants of the 2016 survey receive 50 percent or more off the publication. Sign up to participate in this year's survey by May 16 at [www.minnesotanonprofits.org/2016survey](http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/2016survey).

### **Paid Parental Leave, Funding Equity and Nonprofits, Leadership and Race Survey**

By Jon Pratt, MCN executive director

The last 12 months have seen a dramatic increase in proposals to improve the conditions of employment in the U.S. economy, from minimum wage and scheduling reforms to paid sick time and parental leave. The cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul have been actively working on paid sick time requirements for employers, and the Minnesota State Senate held hearings on providing paid leave for family care, pregnancy, bonding and serious medical conditions.

Every two years, MCN publishes the *Minnesota Nonprofit Salary and Benefits Survey*, and in 2012, MCN added the following question to the benefits section: “In addition to paid time off, do organizations provide paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child?” Of the 513 organizations that responded to the survey in 2014, 14 percent said they provide paid parental leave.

This summer, nonprofit employers will be asked to respond to the eighth edition of the survey. Information from the survey is widely used by nonprofits in assessing compensation for dozens of positions and a broad range of employee benefits, such as parental leave or sick leave.

To participate in the 2016 Minnesota Nonprofit Salary and Benefits Survey, visit [www.minnesotanonprofits.org/2016survey](http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/2016survey).

#### **State funding backed to address racial economic disparities and business opportunities**

Last September, the U.S. Census Bureau released data showing that median household income for black Minnesotans fell 14 percent, leading the African American Leadership Forum to issue a 5 Point Program to Address Economic Inequality. The same month, in a speech to the Minnesota Business Partnership, Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton pledged that disparities between Minnesota’s white and minority populations in income, health and education will be a top state priority “from now on.”

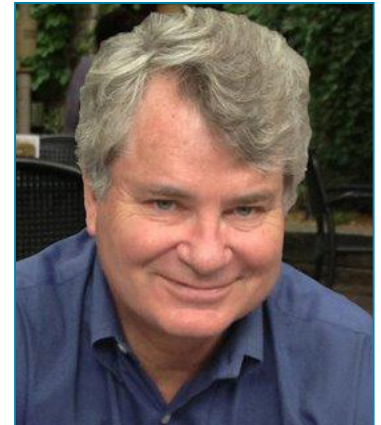
Governor Dayton’s budget proposal includes \$100 million in one-time infusions of capital into business development programs, youth employment initiatives and down-payment assistance for low-income first-time homebuyers. Additionally, the budget includes \$2 million in grants to support “small community-based organizations that work with communities of color to expand their organizational and staff capacity in the areas of strategic planning, human resources, financial management, information technology or governance.”

The case for a major state commitment was reinforced by a major press event about the United Black Legislative Agenda to help support black-owned businesses. The Agenda was co-created by leaders from the African American Leadership Forum, Black Lives Matter Minneapolis, Council of Minnesotans of African Heritage, Neighborhoods Organizing for Change, representatives from the Somali-American community and the Minneapolis Urban League. The Coalition of Black and Immigrant Women of Color also offered legislative proposals with statements from the Black Women’s Wealth Alliance, African Career Education Resource, Isuroon and Ahava Birth-Works. Legislative decisions are pending.

#### **Participate in the 2016 Nonprofits, Leadership and Race Survey**

MCN and other nonprofit capacity-building organizations throughout the U.S. are encouraging participation in the 2016 Nonprofits, Leadership and Race Survey—a short, confidential survey open to all nonprofit staff and board members. The survey, led by the Building Movement Project, focuses on experiences at work, views of leadership and perspectives on nonprofits and race. It closes on May 15.

To learn more, visit [www.buildingmovement.org](http://www.buildingmovement.org), and to take the survey, visit [bit.ly/BMPRaceSurvey](http://bit.ly/BMPRaceSurvey).



## Twenty VISTA Members to Build Capacity at Community-Based Nonprofits

Continued from page 1

Returning organizations include African Economic Development Solutions, Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Revitalization Program, Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research (HACER), Hmong American Farmers Association, Ka Joog, Karen Organization of Minnesota, LegalCORPS, Nexus Community Partners and Nonprofits Assistance Fund.

MCN's VISTA program launched in 2014 to support small nonprofits in their role as trusted and culturally appropriate providers of community resources. Although community-based nonprofits have an intimate understanding of community needs, these organizations often face barriers.

In August 2014, the first cohort was placed with nonprofit assistance organizations (such as MCN) to direct the valuable skills and resources of these organizations toward community-based nonprofits. As MCN learned more about

the strengths and needs of culturally specific nonprofits, VISTAs were placed directly with these organizations. In this role, members build capacity for organizations by creating tools, refining systems and connecting host sites to resources. This is the work being done by the 12 VISTA members currently serving, and the work that will be carried on by 20 members next year.

For VISTA members, the program is not only about building capacity; it is a pathway to a future career in the nonprofit sector. Members learn about nonprofits through hands-on experience and gain valuable skills during their service year through extensive training and professional development.

In the coming years, the VISTA program looks forward to sustaining partnerships with culturally specific nonprofits to create lasting social change for immigrant and refugee communities and communities of color. At its core, this program seeks to combine

inclusion and equity efforts with tangible actions and results.

Creating shared meaning with members and partner organizations, reducing barriers to access, increasing diversity in the nonprofit sector, amplifying new voices and connecting organizations are just a sample of the many goals of the program as MCN progresses toward a more equitable, inclusive and just society.

VISTA recruitment is in full swing! To learn more about the program or apply, visit [www.mcnvista.org](http://www.mcnvista.org). Applications close May 13, 2016.

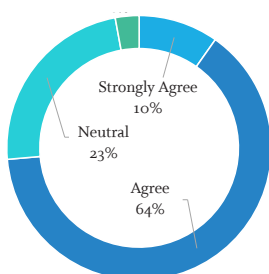
Questions? Contact Jesse Chang, VISTA Program Coordinator, at [jchang@minnesotanonprofits.org](mailto:jchang@minnesotanonprofits.org) or Kate Fridley, VISTA Leader, at [kfridley@minnesotanonprofits.org](mailto:kfridley@minnesotanonprofits.org).

## Trends, Strengths and Gaps in Program Delivery Emerge in Evaluation

Continued from page 1

initiative. Twenty-nine percent followed up with an exhibitor, consultant or potential customer. As a result of these organizational development activities, 74 percent of attendees took actions that positively impacted their organizations' beneficiaries.

*After participating in an MCN event, I took actions that positively impacted my organization's beneficiaries:*



After gathering data for four years, some trends, strengths and gaps in services have emerged. For example, each year attendees cite high levels of interest in improving their fundraising, evaluation and relationship building. In 2015, the survey saw fewer requests for access to programming in Greater Minnesota; this success may be due to MCN's expansion of six staff working outside the Twin Cities. And MCN continues to see demand for more and new networking activities. While experimenting with new networking ideas, MCN will keep working to meet the level of interest for informal relationship building.

MCN's vision is to support nonprofit organizations so that workshop

attendees may accomplish their missions for a healthy, cooperative and just society. This feedback, as well as the evaluations conducted after every event, allows MCN to better understand the needs of nonprofits and to further enhance educational programming.

If you have questions or suggestions, contact Paul Masiarchin, program director at [pmasiarchin@minnesotanonprofits.org](mailto:pmasiarchin@minnesotanonprofits.org) or Andrew Bocher, emerging nonprofit specialist at [abocher@minnesotanonprofits.org](mailto:abocher@minnesotanonprofits.org).

View further information from our 2015 program evaluation at [minnesotanonprofits.org/2015evaluation](http://minnesotanonprofits.org/2015evaluation)

## MCN Seeks Nominations for Three Awards

The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits is in the midst of awards season. MCN is accepting nominations for the 2016 Nonprofit Awards for Mission and Excellence, the Nonprofit Leadership Awards and the Virginia McKnight Binger Unsung Hero Awards.



The Nonprofit Leadership Awards recognize the passion and energy of individual leaders at various stages of their nonprofit careers in the areas of catalytic (emerging), visionary (mid-career) and transformational (experienced) leadership. Recipients will be honored at the 2016 Nonprofit Leadership Conference. Nominations close May 9.



The Nonprofit Awards for Mission and Excellence, presented in partnership with MAP for Nonprofits, recognize six nonprofit organizations who are making outstanding contributions to Minnesota's high quality of life in five areas: Innovation, Anti-Racism Initiative, Advocacy, Responsive Philanthropy and Excellence (large and small organization). Recipients will receive a video capturing their organization's work, recognition at MCN's 2016 Annual Conference and a feature profile in Nonprofit News. Nominations close May 16.



The Virginia McKnight Binger Unsung Hero Awards, presented in partnership with The McKnight Foundation, will recognize four individuals—two from the Twin Cities Metro and two from Greater Minnesota—who have had a significant impact on Minnesota and their communities but have not been widely recognized. Recipients will receive a \$10,000 cash prize, recognition at MCN's 2016 Annual Conference and an invitation to an awards luncheon with The McKnight Foundation. Nominations close May 26.

To learn more, meet past winners and submit a nomination, visit MCN's website at [www.minnesotanonprofits.org/awards](http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/awards).

## Minnesota Budget Project Engages New Partners to Call for Investments in Durable Prosperity

A group of small-business owners opened the 2016 Legislative Session with a message for policymakers: large tax cuts aren't the answer for them. Instead they want public investments that provide Minnesota with a high-quality workforce, strong infrastructure and shared prosperity for all.

The Minnesota Budget Project (MBP) joined with members of small business organizations such as Main Street Alliance and MetroIBA to highlight the importance of state investments in long-term prosperity. MBP has a history of working in partnership with nonprofits, the faith community and organized labor in advocating for fair and sustainable tax choices. Engaging small businesses adds diversity and numbers to the message of sustainability and fairness in tax policy and investments in Minnesota so all can thrive.



Saying large, poorly targeted tax cuts could put at risk a strong economic future for the state, these small-business owners will ask legislators to make strategic investments in education, affordable child care and other building blocks of broader prosperity.

In contrast, the 2015 House tax bill, which is up for consideration again this year, proposes \$2 billion in tax cuts. Proposals such as estate tax cuts and repealing the state property tax are poorly targeted and would crowd out needed investments. In addition, those tax cuts would be ineffective at spurring economic growth.

At a recent press conference, Holly Hatch-Surisook, co-owner of Sen Yai Sen Lek Thai noodle restaurant, pointed out that the small benefit from a cut to the statewide business property tax would not be enough to impact her business model. By combining her financial resources with others in the form of business property taxes, she said, Minnesota can ensure a more stable and resilient workforce.

Engaging the voices of small business owners adds to MBP's long-standing work in making the case that rather than enacting large tax cuts, policymakers should pursue strategic investments in a broad, more durable prosperity for all Minnesotans.

## Embrace and Share the Public Student Loan Forgiveness Program

By Susie Brown, MCN public policy director

Have you heard about the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF)? Unfortunately, many people haven't. PSLF is an amazing opportunity for nonprofit employees and a great tool for our sector to recruit and retain the talent we need to successfully carry out our work in the community.

The program is simple: it forgives direct federal student loans if an employee has made 120 payments while working full-time for a qualified employer, which includes nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organizations and other public institutions. During the time of their payments, the employee can change employers as long as they stay in the nonprofit or public sector. Volunteer service through Peace Corps or AmeriCorps also qualifies.



The federal law to create this program passed Congress as the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007. Subsidized and unsubsidized Stafford Loans, PLUS Loans and Federal Direct Consolidation Loans qualify for PSLF. Although loans may be obtained before the bill was passed into law in 2007, the 120 payments must have started in October 2007 or later (payments made starting in October 2007 can be counted retroactively). In 2017, the first loan forgiveness will occur. For these nonprofit employees, the remainder of their federal loans, after 120 payments, will be forgiven. Imagine that!

The PSLF is a good example of a well-intended and very important law change that has struggled in implementation. Far fewer public sector and nonprofit employees than are eligible have taken part. Some estimates indicate that only 15 percent of those who are eligible have signed up for this opportunity. Partly because of this, some believe the program should be eliminated. At the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, we see a different path: let's redouble our efforts to educate the public about this program and present it to our employees—current and prospective—as a special benefit of working in the nonprofit sector.

If you are a nonprofit employee and would like to take part in the program you'll need to find out if your loans and your employment qualify for the program. Then, you'll need to make 120 payments as a part of a qualified payment plan. The details of these requirements can be found at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov).

If you are a nonprofit employer, please take this opportunity to spread the word to your employees and help them understand this unique opportunity they are afforded through working in the nonprofit sector. We suggest sharing this information with those considering nonprofit employment, new employees at the time of hire and all employees on a periodic basis.

In Minnesota, there is an effort to ensure that this information is available to those who are eligible. A bill before the 2016 legislature would require the Minnesota Office of Higher Education to create educational materials about the program and would require public sector and nonprofit employers to inform their employees at the time of hire and again once per year about this opportunity. We think this is a smart and strategic idea, and it is moving forward with our support. In the nonprofit sector's effort to recruit and retain the best employees, let's embrace the opportunity presented by the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

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## Nonprofit Awards and Advancements



Beverly Bushyhead is the new program director at **Nonprofits Assistance Fund**.

Joanne Kosciolk joined **Project for Pride in Living** as vice president of development and external affairs.

**Neighbors, Inc.** named **Beth Skwira** as director of development and **Sara Keis** as director of marketing and communications.



**Jewish Family and Children's Services** named **Lee Friedman** as chief operating officer.

The **Women's Foundation of Minnesota** named **Saanii Hernandez** as vice president and **Mary Beth Hanson** as vice president of external relations.



**Touchstone Mental Health** welcomed **ShannaLee Horvik** as manager of marketing and development.

**Urban Roots** named **Lori Woodward-Arnold** its executive director.

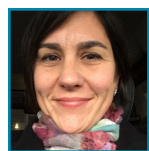


**Mary McKeown** is the new president and CEO at **Keystone Community Services**.

The **Minnesota International Center** changed its name to **Global Minnesota**.



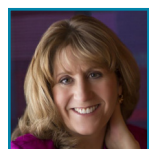
**Animal Human Society** welcomed **Jacey Cassem** as director of human resources.



**Karen Zumach** was named director of community forestry at **Tree Trust**.

**Mother of Mercy Senior Living** welcomed **Jason Bergmann** as the executive director of its foundation.

**HandsOn Twin Cities** announced the appointment of **Zeeda Magnuson** as interim executive director.



**Machel Kendrick** joined **Head of the Lakes United Way** as director of marketing.

**College Possible** announced **Erin Carlin Campbell** as its new vice president of operations.



**Lifeworks Services** announced president and CEO **Judy M. Lysne's** retirement after 43 years with the organization.

The **Open Door** welcomed **Jason Viana** as executive director.



**Karen White** joined **The Northwest Minnesota Foundation** as vice president for programs.

**Nonprofits Assistance Fund** welcomed **Glyn Northington** as special initiatives director.



**Rich Stoebe** joined **The Arc Greater Twin Cities** as director of strategy and marketing.

The **Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota** announced **Tim Gallagher** as board president and **Brandon Megal** as vice president.

The **Karen Organization of Minnesota** named **Eh Tah Khu** and **Alexis Walstad** as co-executive directors.

### Submit Your Announcements

Visit MCN's Sector News at [www.minnesotanonprofits.org/sector-news](http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/sector-news). Member organizations are invited to submit your organization's awards, staffing announcements and other news to [cswanson@minnesotanonprofits.org](mailto:cswanson@minnesotanonprofits.org).

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## Youthrise as Intermediary Reduces Conflict Over DOJ Funding Role

With \$400,000 in funding from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and private funders, the Somali Youth Development Fund at Youthrise issued \$300,000 in one-year grants to six Somali-led community-based organizations in March for their youth programs, community engagement and capacity building.

The organizations receiving funding are the Africa Reconciliation and Development Organization (\$25,000), Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota (\$100,000), Shanta Link (\$35,000), Somali American Parent Association (\$85,000), Ummah Project (\$30,000) and West Bank Athletic Club (\$25,000). The remaining \$100,000 is reserved for capacity building.

The U.S. DOJ is devoting funding to youth programs in the Twin Cities, Boston and Los Angeles to assess how young American Muslims might be dissuaded from joining jihadist groups or going to fight in the Middle East.

However, this funding became controversial when Andrew Luger, U.S. Attorney for Minnesota, advocated for the funding. Luger's involvement created tension over whether social services might be used as a cover for intelligence gathering or could

stigmatize Muslim youth as potential terrorists.

"We are concerned that those groups that receive funding will be seen as agents of law enforcement," Jaylani Hussein, executive director of Council on American-Islamic Relations Minnesota, told the Star Tribune. "Allowing the federal criminal prosecutor and law enforcement agencies to engage in social services and organize mentorship and after-school programs ... blurs the line between community outreach and intelligence gathering."

To create important distance between government and the nonprofits receiving the funding, Youthrise, a Minneapolis-based intermediary funder created by The McKnight Foundation in 2010, agreed to accept the funds with a complete separation of control and reporting.


"Youthrise decided to take the lead in administering DOJ funds because we wanted to ensure funds were directed to support positive youth development and to build the capacity of culturally specific organizations in the Somali Community," said Marcus Pope, Youthrise director of partnerships and external relations. "We believe

that communities have the capacity to solve their own problems if resources are made to be responsive to their ideas. We've had a history of supporting Somali organizations and saw this as an opportunity to build on those efforts."

Youthrise has four years of experience with organizations serving East African and Somali youth and has invested nearly \$800,000 in Somali-led organizations and culturally specific initiatives serving the Somali community.

Additionally, YouthPrise worked with a Somali-American task force and others to identify community needs, assets and capacity building requirements of Somali-led nonprofits serving youth and families. The grantmaking process was designed to be transparent and competitive, with public information sessions and open posting of materials, which attracted requests of more than \$1 million from 14 organizations.

The buffer Youthrise creates between the DOJ and the nonprofits is consistent with the best practices recommended in MCN's Principles & Practices for Nonprofit Excellence about the need for nonprofits to remain independent and autonomous from government or other external influences.



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## Providing Food, Shelter and Hope for Minnesotans in Need: Open Your Heart to the Hungry and the Homeless, 2015 Mission Award Winner



Founded in 1986 by employees of the State of Minnesota who wanted to direct their employee giving dollars specifically to serve hungry and homeless people, Open Your Heart to the Hungry and Homeless is now supported by employees in 39 different workplaces in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Over the course of its 30 years, Open Your Heart has awarded tens of millions of dollars in grants to food shelves and homeless shelters across the state to help them better serve hungry and homeless Minnesotans.

In response to a 2014 Wilder Research report stating that 41 percent of Greater

Minnesota homeless were unsheltered as opposed to 12 percent in the metro, Open Your Heart launched an initiative to increase the number of available shelter beds in various Greater Minnesota communities. With a matching grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation, the organization created a \$120,000 pool of funds that assisted in the creation of 279 additional shelter beds and hundreds of motel vouchers for homeless and domestic violence victims in Greater Minnesota. The organization was also able to fund 11 different agencies from eight different towns from Willmar to International Falls, serving homeless youth, families, single adults and veterans.

Other Open Your Heart initiatives include supporting the development of community gardens, paying for remodeling projects, and purchasing beds, furniture, security systems and other physical needs to make shelters safe and dignified places to begin the road back from a homeless life. Additionally, the organization has placed an often-overlooked focus on durable goods and improving infrastructure, purchasing hundreds of commercial coolers, kitchen equipment, storage and transportation for food shelves across the state.

Partnering with those who serve people in need, Open Your Heart continues to draw their motivation from a core belief that every Minnesotan should be free from hunger and homelessness. As a result of the organization's shining example, the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and MAP for Nonprofits were honored to present the 2015 Mission Award for Responsive Philanthropy to Open Your Heart to the Hungry and the Homeless.

To learn more about Open Your Heart to the Hungry and the Homeless, visit [www.oyh.org](http://www.oyh.org).