

NONPROFIT NEWS

WHAT'S TRENDING?

- Better addressing employee satisfaction and retention
- Data dive: Minnesota's changing labor market
- 2024 trends MCN staff think you should watch
- Expectations for Minnesota's 2024 Legislative Session
- Spotlight on Greater Minnesota nonprofits



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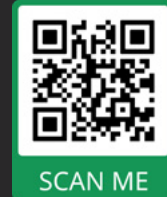


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Nonprofits are a force for good. We're here to help.

As one of the largest state associations of nonprofit in the country, the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) joins nonprofits across interest areas to advance important nonprofit issues.

MCN is a trusted ally and advocate for you. Visit our website to learn how MCN can support your nonprofit: www.minnesotanonprofits.org.

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Letter from MCN's Executive Director

Better addressing employee satisfaction & retention

This issue of *Nonprofit News* is all about current and emerging trends, and while I can certainly cite challenges nonprofits face in recruiting specialized skill sets, rising demands for services, cultural shifts, frustrations with boards, and declining revenue – I kept coming back to *HOW* these trends impact the most important resource of nonprofits – its people.

I am grateful to the workers who pushed hard over recent years to raise awareness and normalize talking about mental health, work-life balance, self-care, and burnout. Lately, perhaps out of necessity, organizations have been exploring and learning from shifting internal policies and work culture to try to better address employee satisfaction and retain strong talent. I want to share some highlights.

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER: While we should push to think beyond what we may think is possible to support yourselves and your team, not all ideas are appropriate, or even possible, for YOUR unique organization, and that is ok.



Nonoko Sato
Executive Director

- 1. Offer competitive wages and benefits.** Nothing will replace this. If anything, start by creating a compensation philosophy, clear job descriptions with transparent salary ranges, and identifying benefit packages that include coverage for mental health services.
- 2. Close the entire office.** It's never fun to come back from a relaxing vacation and face a tidal wave of meetings, emails, and demands for your time because everyone else was still working while you were away. Close the office for half a day on Fridays in the summer or identify a week that is least disruptive for your staff.
- 3. Reimagine full-time work.** We may dream of a three-day weekend, but for many of us, the idea of a four-day work week feels out of reach. Many nonprofits (especially those that work directly in community) must work weekends and evenings. But perhaps less hours a week can be possible during "off seasons" (ha you might say) or 40 hours can be fulfilled in four days rather than five.
- 4. Create a sabbatical policy.** A meaningful and significant time off can help workers recharge, especially in fields that are most stressful. If you can, create a company-wide policy so that everyone benefits. Keep

in mind that tenured-based policies may inequitably benefit workers more who had the ability to stay in the workforce. Also, no, parental time off does not count – taking care of a baby is not "vacation." YKIYK.

- 5. Honor benefits accrued from previous employment.** A candidate may have spent years at another organization (shows potential long-term commitment!) but loses all the accrued vacation and other tenured-based benefits when they start at a new job. If years of experience is a criteria in the job description, consider offering the new hire to start at the same (or similar) benefit level they were accustomed to before.

- 6. Consider co-leadership models.** Shared responsibility in a high-stress job could lessen the burden and mitigate burnout. It is not for everyone, and the model should be designed with the people who are expected to share the roles. Co-leadership doesn't just have to be for the top staff role, at MCN we are trying out a co-chair model on our board and committees this year.

- 7. Advocate for legislation that support your staff.** Affordable housing, childcare, healthcare, tax credits for working families and children, sick and safe time leave, paid medical and family leave, state-sponsored retirement options, among others, all contribute towards a healthy and sustainable workforce.

If you are thinking, "well my ED/CEO would never...", remember that they are also an employee of the organization. Thinking through and implementing cultural change takes so much time and intentionality. If this is important to you, be an active part of the design process and have patience. All of us need to create policies that are sustainable long-term and positively affect others who work at the organization long after we have left.

Let me know if you are trying or hearing of other interesting ideas. In community,

2024 trends MCN staff think you should watch

In addition to annual planning, examining the broader nonprofit sector for emerging trends can help ensure your organization and your work is moving in the right direction to best meet the needs of your community.

MCN staff share current and emerging trends we think you should keep an eye on in 2024.



Mark Buenaflor

*Operations & Database
Manager*

AI usage policies

Advancements in generative AI have rapidly progressed, and many now use it to assist with a variety of tasks like drafting documents, creating presentations, taking notes, and responding to messages.

While AI can improve and transform numerous aspects of our work, the legal and ethical ramifications must be carefully considered. Organizations should

develop policies that ensure AI usage complies with legal standards, protects data, prevents bias and discrimination, and is subject to human oversight.



Laura Dunford

*Deputy Director
of Communications*

Social media is no longer free

With *organic* reach and engagement decreasing year-over-year on all social media, make sure to discuss what a reasonable ROI on your team's time is without budget investments. In 2022, 47 percent of nonprofits increased spending on social media advertising and boosted posts, with a \$1,200 average annual budget.

Evaluating your ROI on social media may have you shifting strategies or reprioritizing platforms. Ask yourself – are my nonprofits' key audiences on this platform and are they looking for my organization here?



Courtney Gerber

Program Director

What if no one wants to lead?

The time for bridge building across generations, right-sizing expectations of nonprofit leaders, and actively repairing the gender and educational biases, racism, and classism embedded in these expectations, is now.

Folks are asking for professional development and networking spaces

that foster connection, mentorship, and strategizing among peers that will lead to the systemic change required for healthier nonprofit leadership models to thrive. Without well and trusted leaders, recruitment and retention conversations fall flat.



Lenny Jones

Development Manager

Centering nonprofits in state grants reform

We know that many eligible nonprofits – particularly small, rural-based, and/or BIPOC-led and serving organizations - face significant systemic barriers in accessing state grants. Likewise, state agencies face obstacles in administration, training, technology, and staffing.

None of this will get fixed without collaboration between nonprofits and state grantmaking staff. [Consider getting your nonprofit involved in MCN's coalitions on state grant reforms.](#)



John Wurm

*Organizational Development
and Engagement Director*

Mystery belongs in Hollywood, not in hiring

As nonprofits navigate rapidly changing and increasingly competitive hiring, the need to provide transparency regarding pay, benefits, and work models has transitioned from a preferred practice to a baseline must-have. Anything less is a non-starter for many skilled, in-demand jobseekers.

In 2023, of the nearly 13,000 full-time, part-time, and paid internships posted to [MCN's Job Board](#), those posted with a salary received twice as many views as those without. Get access to the latest compensation and benefits data by signing up to [participate in MCN's 2024 Minnesota Nonprofit Salary & Benefits Survey](#).

Guest column with Megan Chmielewski of Minnesota Compass

Data dive: Minnesota’s changing labor market

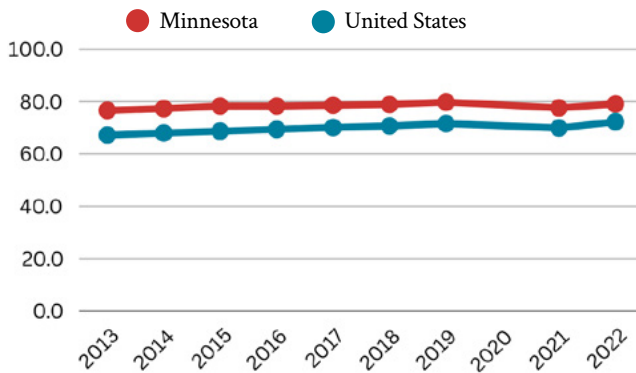
Is your organization struggling to recruit and retain staff? You are not alone.

Organizations across Minnesota and nationally are reporting staffing shortages as our labor force ages, “reshuffles,” and looks for additional flexibility. In this article, we will highlight some of the data behind Minnesota’s changing labor market.

Minnesota has a high workforce participation rate

Nearly 4 in 5 working-age Minnesotans were employed in 2022, tied for the highest rate in the nation. Although that rate dipped a couple of points in 2021 (when jobs were also more scarce due to pandemic closures), it has almost fully rebounded.

Proportion of Adults (ages 16-64) Working



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census and American Community Survey

Our labor force is shrinking as Minnesota ages

For over a decade, growth in Minnesota’s working-age population has been slowing. Baby Boomers began hitting retirement age in 2011, and new domestic and international migration has not been sufficient to fill workforce gaps left by retiring workers. This shrinking labor force means fewer workers available to fill job openings, making it harder for employers to hire.

Nonprofits may be more vulnerable to the retirement wave, since the nonprofit workforce skews older. Effective succession planning can help to both retain younger workers and to fill the roles of those who retire.

It is not that “no one wants to work anymore”

There has been a persistent myth that the COVID-19 pandemic

created a group of newly disaffected workers who are opting out of the workforce, but the data do not bear that theory out.

Labor force participation remains high and the people who are not working or looking for work look about the same as before the pandemic. About 72 percent of working-age people who are not in the labor force are either in school, disabled, living with someone with a disability, or living with minor children. That is to say, caregivers, students, and disabled people make up a large majority of non-workers, and that share is statistically unchanged compared to 2019.

Workers may be looking for additional flexibility

Minnesotans may not be leaving the labor force entirely, but they are leaving jobs. Resignations have risen over the past three years, but so have new hires, giving rise to the term “The Great Reshuffle,” in which the labor force turns over at a high rate as employees seek new and better jobs.

Competitive pay is part of retaining workers and attracting new ones, but so is work culture and flexibility. Hybrid and remote work has greatly increased over the past few years, with 16 percent of Minnesota workers reporting that they usually work from home (up from 6 percent in 2019), and up to 40 percent working from home some of the time. Other flexible work arrangements like part-time positions, limited evening and weekend hours, and generous PTO may also attract employees looking for work-life balance.

Minnesota’s aging labor force creates an undeniable challenge for nonprofits looking to stay strong as long-time staff retire. The positive news is that Minnesotans are participating in the labor force at a high rate, and are willing to change positions for a competitive job. The task for employers is to find the right combination of pay, work culture, and flexibility that can fulfill their missions while attracting the next generation of talent.

See the data: Read Minnesota Compass Insights article [“Data mythbuster: No one wants to work anymore.”](#)

Led by Wilder Research, [Minnesota Compass](#) contributes to Minnesota’s shared well-being by providing credible, easy-to-access data, tracking trends and measuring progress, and improving understanding to make data-informed decisions.

Expectations for Minnesota’s 2024 Legislative Session



Marie Ellis

Public Policy Director

Going into this legislative session, I was pretty confident we knew what topics we’d be hearing a lot about, most notably funding for infrastructure projects across the state. I was not expecting snakes and hedgehogs, but here we are.

The Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives, Melissa Hortman, has likened last year’s legislative session to a snake

eating a hedgehog, while saying about 2024, “For a while, this snake is not going to be eating anything else...because it has to digest the hedgehog.”

It’s a surprisingly appropriate analogy.

During the brisk 2023 legislative session, Minnesota policymakers passed a myriad of consequential policy and budget measures, including many of MCN’s advocacy priorities: creating a state Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program, enacting a nation-leading Child Tax Credit ([see page 10 for eligibility information](#)), and other policies that level the playing field among employers and remove barriers keeping some of our neighbors from fully participating in our state’s prosperity. Words used to describe last year’s session include monumental, historic, record-breaking, and action-packed.

MCN and the Minnesota Budget Project policy teams advance public policies that strengthen the nonprofit sector and Minnesota communities through policy development and analysis.

Just released, MCN’s 2024 Public Policy Agenda outlines priorities we’re championing on behalf of Minnesota nonprofits.

[Download the Agenda](#)



The state is now focused on implementing these new policies so to meet their full potential. For example, the state (through the Department of Employment and Economic

Development) needs to put PFML into practice.

Implementation includes: notifying and educating employers and employees across the state, creating mechanisms for applying for and disbursing funds, and hiring employees to do all that work. (Resource: [What nonprofits as employers need to know about PFML.](#)) The legislature also has a few pieces of PFML to iron out before it takes effect January 1, 2026. This policy fine-tuning and implementation is the hedgehog in the middle of the snake.

We’re not going to see the same amount of budget action in 2024. Last year, policymakers set the state’s budget for the next two years, and they put the \$17.6 billion surplus to work on things like PFML, housing, transportation, health care, child care, and other public services.

What does this mean for the 2024 legislative session? For nonprofit advocates, it means it will be challenging to get new funding initiatives passed. Rather, we’re more likely to see technical fixes to some of the bills passed in 2023. Let’s think of those as worms, the snake’s more easily-digestible snack.

Okay, I’ll admit that this analogy is getting away from me. What we can expect to hear about a lot this year is capital investment projects, meaning tangible infrastructure projects like water treatment facilities, roads, and bridges.

Generally, even-numbered calendar years are known as “bonding” years, because that’s when policymakers focus on passing legislation authorizing the state to use proceeds from the sale of bonds to investors to pay for capital investments (building or repairing tangible physical infrastructure). This session, legislators of both parties will need to work together and agree on a set of infrastructure projects, as passing bonding bills requires three-fifths of the votes, rather a simple majority.

In the past few years, the Legislature has included nonprofit capital projects in their capital investment packages, and funded them with general funds, because bonding can only be used to fund government-owned infrastructure. We don’t expect to see a large investment in communities through nonprofit capital projects in 2024, because of the modest amount of dollars available.

Bottom line: In 2024, expect legislators to focus on implementing changes passed in 2023, possibly funding smaller budget items, and infrastructure projects.

Nonprofit news & advancements



Propel Nonprofits announced Henry Jiménez as president and CEO.



NAMI Minnesota welcomed Abby Gregory as director of development.



Valerie John-Joseph joined Habitat for Humanity of Minnesota as lending director.



COPAL welcomed Melody Artega as environmental justice coordinator, and Brenda Gutiérrez and Santiago Suárez as adult career and employment counselors.



Catholic Charities Twin Cities announced Bob Alfstrand as senior vice president for advancement.



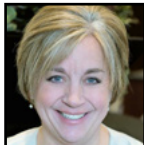
Hoang Murphy was named CEO of People Serving People.



Twin Cities Catalyst Music welcomed Beth Mammenga, MBA as executive director.



Adora Land joined The Bush Foundation as grantmaking director.



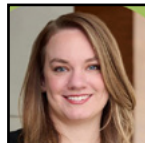
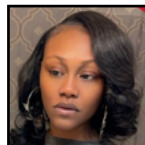
Stratis Health welcomed three new board members, Jeremy Hanson Willis of Rainbow Health, Pamela Parker of SNP Alliance, and Janet Silversmith of Minnesota Medical Association.



The Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundation welcomed Kari Onyancha as senior director of partnerships and Alfonso Tomás Wenker as vice president of community impact.



John M. Harrington was announced as CEO of MicroGrants and LightsOn!



Urban Homeworks welcomed Moussa Maiga as donor relations manager, and three new board members Tabitha Cunningham of Urban Homeworks, Jason Hetland of Bleakley Financial Group, and Erin Valine of Fabyanske, Westra, Hart & Thomson, P.A.

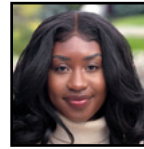


Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity announced Cecile Bedor as chief real estate officer.



Make-A-Wish Minnesota welcomed five staff, Paul Krueger as president & CEO, Lilian Chan as volunteer services coordinator, Teresa Evans as vice president of development, Ellie Hughes as events manager, and Trin Peterson as executive assistant.

Kristen Cullen joined Jewish Family Service of St. Paul as director of development.



Rose-Marie Athiely was named philanthropic services associate of The Minneapolis Foundation.



The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits welcomed four staff members, Kelven Kai Manuel as Minnesota Budget Project capitol pathways intern, Sabrina Leung as Minnesota Budget Project engagement and content manager, Jackie McNeil as Southern Minnesota regional representative, and Bailey Sutter as public policy manager.



Michelle Tran Maryns was named vice president of communications of the Women's Foundation of Minnesota.



The Initiative Foundation board of trustees announced Brian Voerding as president. Brian serves as secretary on MCN's board of directors.

Hunger Solutions Minnesota and The Food Group have merged, effective March 1.

Celebrate your new staff and board members!

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

Please include their name, title, and photo if available. MCN cannot guarantee all announcements will appear in *Nonprofit News*.

Spotlight on Greater MN: MCN’s regional team road trip



Kelly LaCore

*Northern MN
Regional Representative*

MCN’s Greater Minnesota team recently restructured to build our regional capacity.

With Jes Wysong as membership manager, Kelly LaCore serving Northern Minnesota, and our newest colleague, Jackie McNeil serving Southern Minnesota, our collective focus shifted to hiring and expanding our team in Central Minnesota.



Jackie McNeil

*Southern MN
Regional Representative*

Obtaining a better understanding of nonprofits in the Central region strip of the state was the first step before adding a team member, so we loaded up our cars and met in the middle.

With limited time to gain a general perspective of the landscape, we connected with those whose missions intersected with ours: work that uplifts the nonprofit sector and commitment to its engagement.



Jessica Wysong

Membership Manager

We spent time with West Central Initiative and Central Initiative Foundations. We connected with MCN board members who are leaders of Central Minnesota nonprofits. And we met with and learned a lot about the Central Minnesota service cooperatives.

All of these conversations centered around the communities these organizations were serving, what was going well, where nonprofits were seeing gaps, and how MCN could be helpful and bring valuable support as we move forward with hiring a new Central Minnesota regional representative in their community.

This is a common approach to MCN’s regional work, and we never know where the conversations will lead.

From these meetings, we continue to hear universal themes within the sector: a desire for more information on starting

a nonprofit, grant seeking and writing, board governance basics, and financial management and compliance.

Likewise, time-specific and situational upticks are typically seen around topics like voter engagement and equity and justice.

Much like the people and communities who live in regions across Minnesota, each organization is unique. This is at the heart of most of what folks share with us and is at the root of many of their questions.

From our trip, we have a better understanding on the nuances of how these overarching trends are being experienced. This information is valuable and helps us paint a bigger picture of how issues are experienced by Greater Minnesota and by rural Minnesota communities. Knowing this helps provide guidance in MCN’s priorities, services, and overall work.

Regional representation matters immensely to MCN and how we serve nonprofits in all corners of the state.

Are you interested in working with us to support nonprofits and their missions in Central Minnesota?

[We’re currently accepting applications for MCN’s Central Minnesota regional representative.](#)

Join our team as Central Minnesota Regional Representative!

MCN’s Central Minnesota regional representative serves on this team and plays a key role in MCN’s efforts to provide information, support, and peer advocacy to nonprofits in Central Minnesota.

- Full-time, remote position
- Starting salary: \$24.04 - \$25.77 / hourly
- No benefits delay; eligible on date of hire!
- Must reside within service area listed in position description

[Application and full position description](#)

Nonprofits are a trusted voice to promote new tax credits to boost economic well-being for families in our communities



Nan Madden

Director, Minnesota Budget Project

We're calling on your nonprofit organization to help spread the word about powerful new tax credits designed to shrink poverty and strengthen economic well-being among struggling families in your community.

In 2023, the Minnesota Budget Project was one of the lead organizations that successfully advocated for the nation-leading Minnesota Child Tax Credit (CTC).

This year, more than one-third of Minnesota families with kids can qualify for up to \$1,750 per child so that they have more cash to afford clothes, diapers, rent, and other basic expenses of raising thriving children.

It's estimated that the CTC could reduce child poverty in our state by one-third.

Minnesota's CTC importantly includes those immigrant families who had been historically excluded from these types of tax credits because they use an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) when they file their taxes.

In fact, the 2023 tax bill included more than \$500 million in new or expanded tax credits for families living paycheck to paycheck and ITIN filers.

But these tax policies will only have their full effect if people know about and apply for them.

Many of the folks who could benefit don't have a history of filing income taxes, because their incomes are so low that they are not required to do so.

Poverty and disparities are not inevitable – instead, through smart, high-impact policy choices, Minnesota can be a place

where every child can participate in this state's opportunity and prosperity.

A body of research demonstrates that [boosting family incomes – through tools like income-targeted tax credits – expands opportunities for children and is associated with better school performance, better health outcomes, and higher earnings as adults.](#)

Research also shows that these policies can reduce disparities in economic well-being by race and geography

Nonprofits are trusted community voices, so we're relying on you to help get the word out about the new CTC to your communities.

One way is sharing a new public website – [ClaimYourMoneyMN.org](#) – for people to learn more about the CTC, whether they qualify, and how to claim these credits by filing their Minnesota income taxes.

[The Minnesota Department of Revenue also has a set of resources for organizations](#) to use to share on their own websites, social media channels, or newsletters.



ClaimYourMoneyMN
Tax Credits for Families and Workers

Every dollar counts! Learn if you could receive Minnesota's new Child Tax Credit.

It could mean up to \$1,750 per child for you and your family.

To receive the Child Tax Credit, you must file your Minnesota state income tax. Tax filing season goes through April 15.

[Check your CTC eligibility](#)

Nonprofit advocacy sparks change to Minnesota foster care



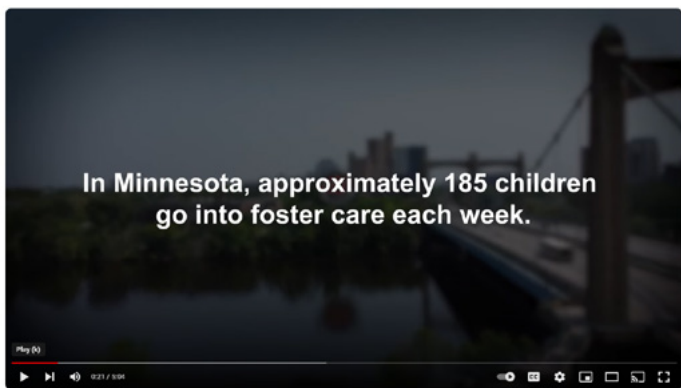
John Wurm

Organizational
Development &
Engagement 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 Advocacy, [Foster Advocates](#).

Seeking to create a unique and outsized impact through relationships, research, and reform, Foster Advocates serves the 14,000 current and uncounted former fosters across Minnesota, empowering them to share their stories as they collectively work together towards meaningful change. The nonprofit was founded in 2018 to address the lack of advocacy groups working to improve the foster care space in Minnesota.



[Watch Foster Advocates’ Mission Awards video.](#)

In 2022, Foster Advocates’ Community Board helped pass a bill that established an Ombudsperson for Foster Youth. Previously, children in out-of-home care had no choice but to rely on the state to ensure their basic needs were being met. The reality is that many fosters are facing further harm while in foster care. With the creation of the Office of the Ombudsman, Foster Advocates hopes to provide critical support and oversight in this role that is currently

being implemented.

Additionally, the organization passed the Fostering Higher Education Act that provides free college tuition (both two-year technical and four-year traditional) to individuals that have been in the Minnesota foster care system. Fostering Independence Grants, which allow fosters to access this opportunity, were made available Fall of 2022, with hundreds of foster youth in Minnesota have taken advantage of the program in 2023.

During the 2023 legislative session, Foster Advocates championed the Survivor Benefits bill that would stop the current practice of counties seizing social security and retirement benefits from foster youth who have lost a parent. The proposed legislation was drafted to halt the practice, as well create a trust for the funds to be accessed by fosters upon their 18th birthday and repay the funds that were seized.

While the full Survivor Benefits bill did not pass in 2023, an alternative proposal was passed which will study the issue, and Foster Advocates looks forward to focusing on additional pathways to justice for Fosters experiencing the loss of benefits in Minnesota.

By empowering fosters to take the lead in vital advocacy efforts, Foster Advocates has helped make real change for thousands with lived experience across the intersections of foster care in Minnesota. The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits was pleased to present the organization with the 2023 Minnesota Nonprofit Mission Award recipient for Advocacy. [Learn more about Foster Advocates.](#)

Nominate an award-worthy nonprofit!

Do you know a Minnesota nonprofit (maybe yours) doing awe-inspiring work to make positive change in your community? Don’t wait for them to toot their own horn, do it for them!

[Nominate a nonprofit for the 2024 Minnesota Nonprofit Mission Award](#) in the categories of Advocacy, Innovation, Anti-Racism, or Responsive Philanthropy.

Nomination open through Sunday, May 12

Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
2314 University Avenue West, Suite 20
St. Paul, MN 55114 -1802
Address Service Requested

Update your record with MCN
by emailing info@minnesotanonprofits.org.

03.19.24
10am - 11:30am

In-Person, MCN office, St. Paul

[Understanding Equitable Investing Structures for Nonprofits](#)

03.27.24
9am - Noon

Virtual

[Beginning Grantwriting](#)

Reoffered [June 4](#), [September 19](#), and [December 12](#)

04.16.24
1pm - 2:15pm

Virtual

[Advocacy 101: Easy and Effective](#)

04.18.24
9am - 4pm

In-Person, MCN office, St. Paul

[Practical Leadership 1.0: Cultivating Thriving Supervisory Relationships](#)

05.08.24
8am - 4:30pm

In-Person, McNamara Alumni Center, Minneapolis

[2024 Nonprofit Leadership Conference](#)

05.14.24
9:30am - 11am

Virtual

[Grantwriters Incubator](#)

Reoffered [September 17](#) and [November 12](#)

05.21.24
9am - Noon

Virtual

[Beginner Grantseeking](#)

Reoffered [August 7](#) and [November 13](#)

07.24.24
8:30am - 4pm

In-Person, Heritage Center of Brooklyn Center

[2024 Nonprofit Fundraising Conference](#)

Registration opening soon!

10.10 - 10.11.24
8am - 4:30pm

In-Person, Saint Paul RiverCentre

[2024 MCN & MCF Joint Annual Conference](#)



Scan to browse events