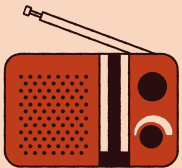
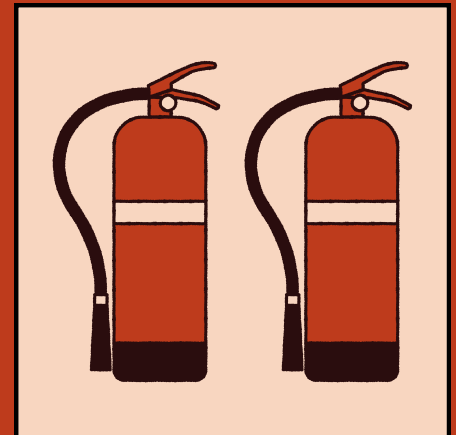
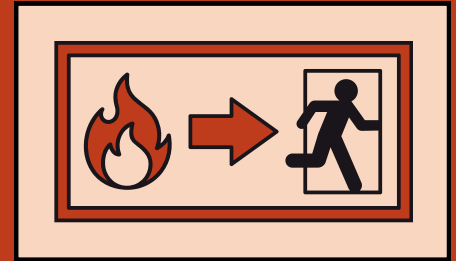


NONPROFIT NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

NONPROFIT



VOLATILITY

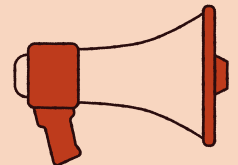
When headlines hit home:
funding cuts in Greater Minnesota



New research: current condition
of Minnesota nonprofits

Taking back the narrative

Deep cuts to food assistance
and health care



Democracy is not a place we arrive,
it's a practice we keep alive



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Subscribe to MCN's e-newsletters by interest area to receive the latest nonprofit resources.



Letter from MCN's President & CEO

Democracy is not a place we arrive, it's a practice we keep alive

The following is an excerpt of Nonoko's speech at MCN's 2025 Annual Conference last month.

Nonprofits are in a crisis. Not the usual “philanthropy dollars are harder to get” kind of crisis, but “democracy is at stake, and the federal government is coming for us” kind of crisis.

Attacks on nonprofits aren't new. Page one of the authoritarian playbook is simple: discredit or weaken civil society. Journalists, attorneys, universities, nonprofits, and any group that organizes people, asks hard questions, or holds power accountable are under attack because we dare to lift up the real-life impact of their decisions on the very communities our government is supposed to serve.

But here's what gives me perspective: our community elders remind us that none of this is new. History shows us democracy can bend, but it doesn't always break.

Civil society—nonprofits, volunteers, unions, advocacy groups, and everyday people who are part of social movements—were always part of the reason why. Nonprofits are not just service providers. We're hope wrapped in a tax-exempt status and a somewhat precarious business model.

In moments like this, when the noise feels louder than the truth, and when the work feels heavier than the reward, I remind myself of something simple: democracy is not a place we arrive. It's a practice we keep alive.

And that practice—the daily, unglamorous, courageous work of showing up for people—is what nonprofits do better than anyone. We are the infrastructure of belonging. We are the connectors across differences, the translators of empathy, the stewards of trust in a time of cynicism. Every meal served, every voter registered, every youth mentored, every community story told—those are acts of democracy.

But make no mistake: authoritarianism doesn't always come wearing a uniform. Sometimes it comes dressed as efficiency. As “neutrality.” As silence. Defending democracy means refusing to be silent when our communities are targeted or erased. It means standing firm when power tells us to shrink. It means remembering that neutrality and silence are never the postures of justice.

Yet even as we resist, we must also rebuild—with joy, with imagination, with one another. Democracy is sustained by the stubborn belief that people can still come together, celebrate, acknowledge, and work through our differences and do what's good not just for ourselves but for our neighbors and communities.

So I encourage us not just to hold the line. Let us hold the light. The light of possibility. The light of shared humanity. The light that says, we are still here, our voices matter, and the people will persevere.

We must align our values with our actions and ensure that our work to strengthen democracy includes repairing the wounds of injustice that weaken it.

Let's find strength in each other and in the collective. An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us. We lift each other's wins, defend each other's right to exist, and refuse to let fear divide us. Because defending nonprofits is defending democracy itself.

And remember: action is louder than words. You don't need to beat yourself up for scrubbing a carefully crafted equity statement from your marketing materials out of fear of backlash.

Each of us—fundraisers, advocates, organizers, program staff, board members—has a part to play in keeping the light of a multicultural democracy alive through daily acts of integrity, connection, and courage.

And we won't just play defense. We will do everything we can to mitigate harm, protect our most vulnerable, and document injustices so they can one day be reversed. And in that process maybe we can build something better.

The future of our democracy will not be decided in one election or one policy fight. It will be decided by people like us, choosing every day to make community stronger than fear.

So take heart. Take action. And let's take care of each other.

In community,




Nonoko Sato

President & CEO

When headlines hit home: federal funding cuts in Greater Minnesota



Jackie McNeil

*Southern Minnesota
Regional Representative*

If a call comes in the middle of the night, and there are no nonprofits available to answer the phone, did it really ring?

Across Minnesota, nonprofits are facing that nightmare scenario, while still firmly focused on their missions. [Already facing increasing demand and expenses, along with declining funding](#), nonprofits are walking a gauntlet of federal changes: funding freezes, attacks on DEI and [nonpartisanship](#), a budget bill slashing SNAP and Medicaid, rescission packages, and (at the time of publication) [a government shutdown](#). And the impact is hitting home.

“I think the uncertainty is just so wearing on people, the constant need to pivot,” said Erica Staab, executive director of Hope Center, a domestic violence and sexual assault program in Faribault. She said the destabilization of the entire federal government is trickling down to state and local governments, to nonprofits and individuals. “It’s insidious.”

“We already know that people stay in really unsafe situations because they don’t have the means to get out,” she said, explaining that economic uncertainty makes things worse. And ICE raids make it risky for people to seek services at all. “Our Hispanic clients are terrified.” This increases the danger now and into the future, since the first big cuts at Hope are to violence prevention and education programs.

At the nearby Community Action Center, senior director Anika Rychner says they are already feeling the impact of cuts to The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which represents about one quarter of all the food provided for nearly 18,000 residents of Rice County. There have also been cuts to another USDA program, Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA), which funds the purchase of locally grown food for the food shelf, hurting both farmers and families. It all adds up to a looming crisis of food insecurity, and that’s before the shutdown-related SNAP cutoff and the pending 2026 changes to SNAP assistance more broadly.

“When you have more and more need, and less and less resources, it creates a big strain,” said Rychner, on individuals, organizations, and entire communities.

And crisis programs aren’t the only ones in jeopardy. Michelle Baumhoefner runs A.C.E. of Southwest Minnesota, which organizes senior volunteers, aids caregivers, and educates seniors on healthy living for a rural eight-county area. Now, her program is also at risk.

A.C.E. facilitates the AmeriCorps Senior RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program), which mobilizes over 3,000 volunteers into over 313,000 hours of service. That translates to an \$11.9 million benefit to the local economy. Not only does volunteering provide seniors socialization and connection, but it offers meaning and a sense of purpose, leading to a better quality of life. Essentially, a small amount of money funds a program that makes a huge impact on enhancing the whole community and individual lives. And that funding is at risk.

And as these changes ripple out into the community, especially in greater and rural Minnesota, will we even know?

[The July rescission package](#) clawed back previously approved funds to public media. At Lakeland PBS, that meant a \$1 million cut, roughly 37 percent of their entire budget. They’ve already shelved “Currents,” a regional public affairs program, but what is most threatened now is local news reporting across a wide swath of northern and central Minnesota.

“That’s what we’re most concerned about,” said senior development manager Caroline Larson, along with the WARN (Warning, Alert & Response Network) system which serves to alert the public to tornadoes, wildfires, missing persons, and shelter-in-place orders.

Minnesota Public Radio has taken a similar hit from the rescission package, losing \$5 million a year. But MPR president Duchesne Drew said that they are “doubling down on Minnesota,” increasing membership and expanding fundraising efforts. They’ve also “ramped up our [Greater Minnesota efforts] by increasing news coverage, musical performances, and community engagement activities.”

When and where there is a need in our communities, nonprofits are there to answer the call. For every one of the 30,000 nonprofits in Minnesota, there is a mission, a calling, a passion to serve our communities. But will there be enough funding? And for how long?

New research: current condition of Minnesota's nonprofit sector



Shonni Krengel
Research Manager

MCN is pleased to release our latest research on current key trends in Minnesota's nonprofit sector in two new reports: [2025 Current Conditions of Minnesota's Nonprofit Sector](#) and [2025 Minnesota Nonprofit Economy Report](#).

These reports take in-depth looks at the current wellbeing of nonprofits and the sector's impact on Minnesota's economy. MCN's

goal in collecting and analyzing this data is to provide you with a broad context to place your individual situation in perspective for decision-making and communications.

Findings continue to underscore the crucial importance of multi-year general operating support from donors, providing flexible resources for nonprofits to creatively respond to the needs and priorities of their communities.

Special thanks to Shauna Yang, research intern, and Jon Pratt, advisor, for their contributions to these reports.

Key Findings:

- Nonprofits continue to struggle with increases in demand for services and increased expenses along with decreased or stagnant funding.
- The negative impact of navigating uncertainty within the organization and the broader community.
- The number of nonprofit employees returning to pre-COVID numbers.
- The gender pay parity is much closer in the nonprofit sector than for-profit and government sectors.
- Nonprofit average annual wages increased for the first time since 2022.

Increases in demand for services and expenses, decreased or stagnant funding

Seventy percent of respondents reported that they have seen an increase in the demand for services over the past year. Yet, increasing capacity becomes difficult with expenses rising and decreased or stagnant funding. A record 82 percent reported that their business expenses have increased. Meanwhile, 53 percent reported a decrease in grants from foundations, 46 percent reported a decrease in government funds, and 35 percent reported a decrease in individual giving.

Navigating uncertainty within the organization and the broader community

Many organizations discussed the impact of navigating uncertainty due to recent federal actions, including funding disruptions, attacks on DEI, and increased ICE raids. Due to the chaotic landscape, 50 percent of respondents reported a decrease in staff morale. Nonprofits are not backing down, with a majority of nonprofits increasing or maintaining their public policy work or lobbying.

Number of nonprofit employees returns to pre-COVID figures

Between 2019 and 2020, the nonprofit sector had 22,913 fewer employees (government and for-profit saw similar declines during this same time). By 2024, the workforce grew to 382,382, marking a strong rebound since 2020. In 2024, the nonprofit sector added 6,000 new jobs. Most of these jobs were in the healthcare sector.

Gender pay parity is much closer than for-profit and government sectors

Female employees make up the majority of Minnesota's nonprofit workforce (74 percent), and the nonprofit sector in 2024 had the closest pay parity between female and male employees (beating out government and for-profit sectors). Female nonprofit employees earned 97.6 percent of what their male colleagues earned in 2024, up from 94.2 percent last year. *(Note: Sex data is provided by DEED based on QCEW reporting. MCN recognizes the broad spectrum of sexual and gender identities that transcend the binary of male and female. However, until a change is made at the federal or state agency level, this report series is limited to existing data reporting categories.)*

Average annual wages increase for the first time since 2022

Since 2022, the average annual nonprofit wage decreased each year when adjusted for inflation. In 2023, the average nonprofit annual wage was \$73,509. Then, in 2024, the average annual wage for nonprofits increased to \$73,638. Although it is not a significant increase, it is worthwhile noting the upward trend in average wages.

Read the full research reports:

- [2025 Current Conditions of Minnesota's Nonprofit Sector](#)
- [2025 Minnesota Nonprofit Economy Report](#)

Deep cuts to food assistance and health care for many of the people we serve



Laura Mortenson
*Communications
Director, Minnesota
Budget Project*

Nonprofits serve Minnesotans with the aim of strengthening our communities. [But the massive federal bill, H.R. 1](#), signed into law on July 4, will make unprecedented cuts to affordable health care and food assistance, cuts that help pay for massive tax cuts that primarily go to the wealthy.

Nonprofits should understand how the federal funding cuts

and policy changes to Medicaid and SNAP will harm many of the people they serve, including babies, pregnant people, children in daycare, school-aged kids, people receiving mental or behavioral health supports, families with mixed immigration status, people visiting food shelves, Indigenous people and tribal governments, veterans, low-income people, unhoused people, college students, people with disabilities, and older adults.

As many as 140,000 Minnesotans could lose their health care through Medicaid. One reason is because the law enacts new work reporting requirements for working-aged people participating in Medicaid. Most Medicaid participants who can work are already working; this burdensome red tape will just result in eligible folks losing their health care because they did not successfully navigate the bureaucracy.

H.R. 1 also makes it harder for Minnesotans to get and keep food assistance. Some 29,000 Minnesota adults currently participating in SNAP face new work requirements, including adults ages 55 to 65 and families with children older than 13, as well as veterans, people experiencing homelessness, and youth aging out of foster care.

These federal cuts are vast. While nonprofits, philanthropy, and the state cannot fully fill in the gaps, our collective work includes acting boldly in our own spheres to mitigate the harm, and documenting the harm done from these federal decisions as one step toward eventually reversing them and building something better.

It also means calling on state policymakers to:

- Prioritize Minnesotans' health and economic well-being;
- Reject the targeting of certain public services or groups of people reflected in federal actions;
- Ensure Minnesotans are not excluded from state services because of their immigration status, or other identities and circumstances beyond their control; and
- Raise revenues, especially from those with the most resources, in order to replace lost federal funding, protect crucial services, and meet Minnesotans' needs.

To keep up to date on our analysis of federal impacts and advocacy tools, [subscribe to the Minnesota Budget Project's News and Tools newsletter](#) and [follow us on social media](#).



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Nonprofit news & advancements



Grace Fogland was promoted to major gifts officer at Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota.



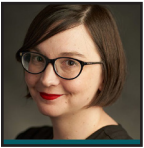
The Minnesota Center for Book Arts announced Courtney Gerber as executive director. Courtney previously worked at MCN as director of programs.



Friends of the Mississippi River welcomed Meghan Anderson as biofuels policy manager and board member Yumi Kashiara.



Chief Bryan Tyner was appointed executive director of the Phyllis Wheatley Community Center.



Liz Kammerer joined the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation as impact investment analyst.



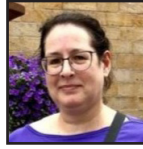
The National Parks of Lake Superior Foundation appointed three new board officers, Andrew Miller of Café Imports as chair, former Duluth Mayor Emily Larson as treasurer, and former professional photographer Jessica Curtes as secretary.



Black Collective Foundation Minnesota announced Naima Farah as director of MN Lead initiative.



ACES announced Angel Crowley as program manager and Cameron Smith as program coordinator.



The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits welcomed Gretchen Dempewolf as data entry specialist and Halla Henderson as director of public policy and research. Former public policy director Marie Ellie is now senior advisor for policy and impact.



NAMI Minnesota welcomed Marcus Schmit as executive director.



Vignesh Chandrasekar of Synchrony Financial and Alllison Streich of Carver County Community Development joined the PRISM board of directors.



The Bush Foundation announced Ramla Bile as grantmaking director of Ecosystem grants program, Rebecca Cruse as grantmaking officer in South Dakota, and Brendon Reay as managing director of investments.



Charlotte Kinzley joined People Serving People as chief program officer.



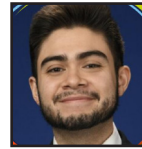
The Northland Foundation announced two new board members, Rachel Hedlund of Friends of the Boundary Waters and Dr. Rick Revoir of the College of St. Scholastica.



Compass Pro Bono announced Martin Ludden as Minneapolis-St. Paul managing director.



The Minnesota Freedom Fund welcomed Jeff Mitchell as director of finance and Lauren Dees-Erickson as program and operations director; Lauren currently serves as deputy executive director.



Sebastian Wong joined Forefront as policy manager.



Lifeworks Services, Inc. welcomed Mark Hintz as chief advancement officer and Kelly Monson as chief growth officer.



MAC Midwest promoted Jen Diederich to chief compliance officer and welcomed Megan Meyer as director of outpatient services.



HandsOn Twin Cities announced three board members, Jason Dehn of NMDP, Nicolette Ng of Medtronic, and Joe Schneider of 3M.

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*.

Taking back the narrative: proactive nonprofit talking points



Laura Dunford

*Deputy Communications
Director*

Trust in nonprofits is being undermined by leaders at all levels of government, threatening the critical work we do in communities across Minnesota. Nonprofits cannot, and will not, stand by and let our good work be mischaracterized and exploited for political gain.

One way to push back is with proactive messaging that takes back our positive nonprofit narrative. We have the stories, the data, the expertise, and the moral clarity to show why a strong nonprofit sector matters.

Messaging Strategies

These tactics are intended as a starting point for your messaging and conversations, but there are many ways to dive deeper to illustrate your nonprofit's impact and integrity:

- **Be prepared:** You never know when a donor will have questions or a media outlet will call. Prepare talking points so your staff are informed and communicate consistent, mission-focused messaging. Prepared talking points also give you the opportunity to integrate messaging proactively across your communications channels for greater reach and impact. [Related resource: Letter to the editor and op-ed best practices.](#)
- **Lead with impact and integrity:** Always bring it back to your communities and impact—every attack on nonprofits is an attack on the community programs people depend on. Regularly communicate specific, measurable results achieved by your organization. Use data-driven reports, infographics, and success stories that clearly illustrate how your programs are meeting their goals.
- **Remain nonpartisan:** Nonprofits are seen as neutral, community-serving organizations. While 501(c)(3) organizations have wide latitude to engage in issue-based advocacy and get-out-the-vote activities, partisan endorsements and messaging divide supporters, alienate clients, and erode your credibility. Even in partisan times, we must remain nonpartisan to protect our missions.
- **Stay on message:** When faced with partisan or false accusations, remember to stay calm and on message. Keep responses fact-based and counter false claims with evidence and clarity. Always pivot back to the positive impact your organization delivers locally, and stay

forward-looking by highlighting solutions, unity, and the essential role nonprofits play in your community.

[Related resource: Nonprofit misconceptions - talking points to combat false narratives.](#)

Evergreen Talking Points

Push back on harmful narratives vilifying nonprofits and help our sector tell the value of our work before it's defined by others:

- **Nonprofits are America's invisible backbone:** Nonprofits deliver critical services efficiently, driving economic growth, and strengthening communities. Nonprofits impact the lives of every Minnesotan by providing essential community services ranging from birth centers to cemeteries and everything in between.
- **Nonprofits provide critical support government does not:** Nonprofits provide support where there are gaps, including life sustaining services and care for the most vulnerable. [According to MCN's 2025 Current Conditions Report](#), 70 percent of nonprofit respondents have seen an increase in demand for services over the past year.
- **Nonprofits are local and mostly small:** Nonprofits provide critical support to local community needs with proven expertise, relationships, and impact. Nonprofits have continued to do more with less, [but that doesn't mean we aren't facing hard circumstances](#), including increased business expenses, and decreased funding from philanthropy, government, and individuals.
- **Government grants are not a handout:** Government grants to nonprofits are not free funding but rather restricted dollars for contracted services where there are gaps in pursuit of broader shared goals. Government funding of services through nonprofits is some of the best money that it invests because it leverages volunteers, community expertise, philanthropic dollars, and community energy, participation, and customization.
- **Nonprofits are nonpartisan:** Nonprofits are nonpartisan and exist to serve and improve communities regardless of political views or affiliation. Nonprofits that have demonstrated expertise in their field of work are being broadly and baselessly attacked for carrying out our missions, expressing our values, and supporting our communities.
- **Nonprofits fuel Minnesota's economy:** Across the state, nonprofits boost the economy, helping with affordable child and elder care, job training, and other support that allow Minnesotans to stay in the workforce. In Minnesota, [nonprofits employed 382,382 people and paid nearly \\$28.1 billion in wages in 2024.](#)

Your trusted nonprofit ally and advocate

Being a MCN member means belonging to a statewide community of care, knowledge, and action. In addition to your ongoing member benefits like [discounts on trainings and conferences](#), [two free publications a year](#), [state and federal advocacy](#), [free postings on Minnesota's largest nonprofit job board](#), and [access to special discount partners](#), we want to make you aware of additional resources to keep your operations and people strong in the year ahead. Nonprofits are a force for good. We're here to help.

Resources and tools to support your work in 2026:

Free Nonprofit Legal Services Initiative

With changing federal policies, Executive Orders, and cancelled federal grants, we know there's a lot of legal uncertainty.

[MCN and LegalCORPS are providing FREE legal resources to all Minnesota nonprofits](#), including:

- Legal Help Desk to provide real-time legal support with referrals to resources and counsel.
- Legal Resource Library to help with legal considerations.
- Compliance support, which includes checklists to make sure you're up to date on the latest federal updates.

Competitive health care benefits

[BenefitsMN is MCN's association health plan](#) that offers eligible organizations stable, robust medical plans at competitive prices, and helps nonprofits recruit, support, and retain the best talent. In 2025, over 160 nonprofits participated in BenefitsMN, with over 2,600 employees and their dependents enrolled.

BenefitsMN will be offering access to other voluntary benefits in 2026 as it continues to support mission-based work. [Learn more and request a proposal for your nonprofit.](#)

Tracking federal policies impacting nonprofits

MCN is actively engaging with elected officials and the National Council of Nonprofits to track and analyze the latest federal orders and memos. Our goal is to mitigate the impact on our state's most vulnerable communities and the operations of Minnesota's nonprofits and their employees.

[Check out our master Impact of Federal Decisions webpage](#) for the latest news, vetted resources, and calls to action to help you navigate this uncertainty.

Nonprofit compliance resources

As our sector navigates the aftermath of a high-profile fraud case, increased anti-nonprofit rhetoric, and an uncertain political and regulatory landscape, it is essential that nonprofits understand the [core state and federal compliance steps required to maintain your nonprofit corporation and federal tax-exempt status](#), comply with the law, and safeguard our ability to solicit donations and funds integral to advancing our missions.

The MCN team is happy to welcome our new director of public policy and research, Halla Henderson

"Advocacy and policy are powerful tools to advance and protect the work of nonprofits while ensuring their voices and experiences are heard in decision-making spaces," Halla shared about her new role. "Together at MCN, we support our members in safeguarding their missions, amplifying their impact, and highlighting the vital role that nonprofits play across Minnesota."

As chair of the Saint Paul Public Schools Board, and former deputy executive director of Minnesota Voice, Halla brings experience in public policy advocacy, youth engagement and development, and elected office on the local level.

Increased member dues in 2026

[MCN has announced new membership dues to go into effect January 1, 2026.](#) Our first dues change in three years, the modest increases will allow MCN to better serve nonprofits through our resource creation, public policy advocacy, educational offerings, sector research, and member benefits designed to save you time and money. For many members, you may see a modest increase or no increase at all. Organizations with budgets of \$25,000 or less will see no increase, small- to mid-sized budgets can expect a modest increase of \$25, and the largest organizations can expect a \$100 increase.

Through the end of 2025, MCN is offering current members the option to renew early for 2026 at 2025 dues levels. [Nonprofit member early renewal online form](#) | [Associate member early renewal online form](#).

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UPCOMING TRAININGS

Opportunities to prioritize your professional development, with reduced rates for MCN members. www.minnesotanonprofits.org/events



Dec. 2-4

Practical Leadership 1.0: Cultivating Thriving Supervisory Relationships

10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Noon | Virtual

December 9

Advocacy 101: Easy and Effective

1 p.m. - 3 p.m. | Virtual

December 9

Event Planners Incubator

11 a.m. - 12 p.m. Noon | Virtual | FREE

December 10

Say Hard Things, Build Strong Teams: Emotionally-Intelligent Communication to Navigate Conflict

2 p.m. - 4 p.m. | Virtual

December 11

Beginning Grantwriting

1 p.m. - 4 p.m. | Virtual

December 17

Taking Up Space: The Roots and Implications of Sizeism

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. | Virtual

December 18

Authentic and Timely Feedback

10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Noon | Virtual

January 6 & 8

2026 Minnesota Grantmakers

9 a.m. - 12 p.m. | 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Virtual

Two days. Three funder-focused sessions. One free *2026 Grants Directory*. Discover MN's most active private, community, and corporate funders.

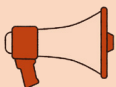
April 23

2025 Nonprofit Finance Conference

7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | In-Person, Minneapolis

Dive into the technical skills, strategic thinking, and processes that keep nonprofits financially compliant, secure, solvent, and equitable.

Help shape MCN's 2026 Conferences: request for session proposals



2026 Nonprofit Fundraising Conference

August 5, 2026 | In-Person, St. Paul

RFP closes: February 4, 2026

Conference focus: Actionable strategies, practical tools, and peer-tested resources to maximize your fundraising and revenue.

Learn more and apply.



2026 MCN Annual Conference

October 29-30, 2026 | In-Person, St. Paul

RFP closes: April 15, 2026

Conference focus: New and emerging trends and topics impacting all nonprofit departments.

Learn more and apply.