

2026 NONPROFIT FINANCE CONFERENCE

APRIL 23, 2026
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Welcome to the 2026 Nonprofit Finance Conference

WiFi Access

Use the network: UofM-Guest (no password)

Download Conference Materials

Continue your learning after today's conference. Scan the QR code to access the Download Center with the digital conference program, and session PowerPoints and handouts.



Dietary Restrictions

If you noted specific dietary needs in your registration, place the slip of paper you received in your name tag on the table at lunch and servers will bring your alternative entree. All meals are gluten free.

Sensory Room

Location: Gateway Room | 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Located next to Registration, the Sensory Room is designed to provide you with calm, focus, and comfort. A range of tools are available to assist with sensory sensitivities and the space itself has dim lighting and a mixture of seating. Please enter with respect for those who are already in the room. You may stay as long as you like.

Exhibitor Hall

Location: Memorial Hall | 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Stop by the Exhibitor Hall to meet nonprofit vendors ready to support your work with their expertise and tools. See page 15 for a full list of conference exhibitors.

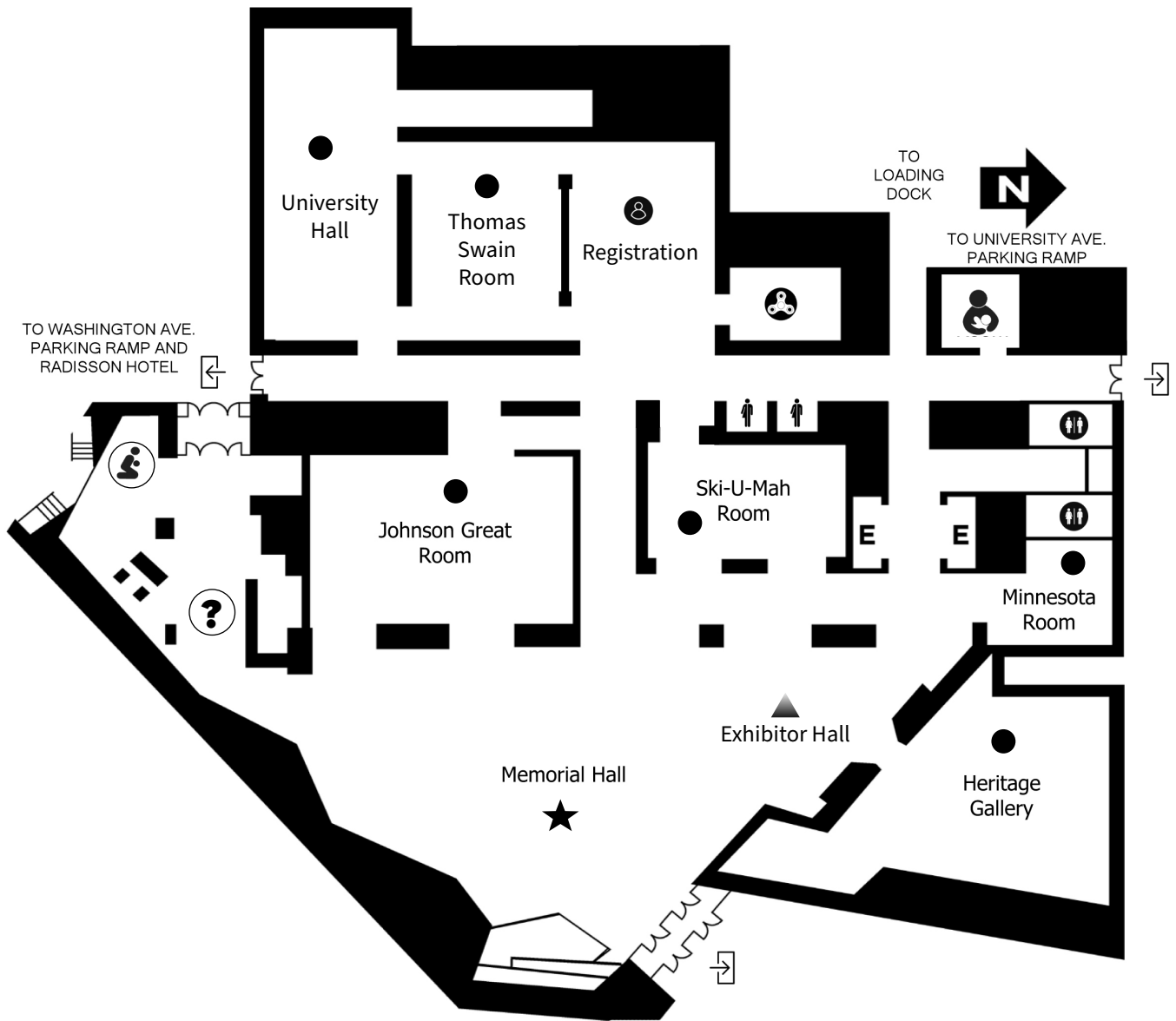
Community Mural

Location: Hallway between Johnson Great Room and University Hall; find it in Memorial Hall after lunch
Take part in a community mural celebrating nonprofit finance. Draw or write your response to the prompt, and watch as the mural comes to life throughout the day. Designed by artist Miska Abdel-Magid.

Share Your Experience

Tag us on social media! You can find MCN on Instagram and Facebook (@minnesotanonprofits), and LinkedIn.

★ Conference Map



MAP KEY



All Gender Restroom

The All Gender Restroom can be found next to the Ski-U-Mah Room.



Breakout Session Room



Entrance/Exit



Exhibitor Hall



Memorial Hall (Breakfast, Keynote, and Lunch)



McNamara Info Desk



Nursing Room

The Big Ten Room (toward the University Ave Parking Ramp exit) is the Nursing Room. Please note there is no fridge.



Prayer Room

There are designated spaces for prayer by the McNamara Info Desk.



Registration and Help Desk



Restroom



Sensory Room



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★ Conference Schedule

THURSDAY, APRIL 23

7:30 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. / Registration Opens; Connect Over Breakfast

8:15 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. / Welcome & Keynote.....Memorial Hall

Drum performance and land acknowledgment by Crow Bellecourt, executive director of the Indigenous Protector Movement

Keynote: *From 90-Day Triage to 10-Year Resilience: Finance, Trust, and Strategy in Minnesota's New Reality*

with Sam Amundson, Michelle Ness, LeeAnn Rasachak, and Nelima Sitati Munene; moderated by Nonoko Sato

10:15 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. / Round I Breakout Sessions

Bridging Financial Wellbeing Gaps in Your Workforce..... Minnesota Room

Clear & Compliant: 3 Ways to Track Restricted FundsSki-U-Mah Room

From Transparency to Trust: Engaging Staff in Finances..... Thomas Swain Room

Key Compensation Decisions Facing MN Nonprofits: PFML, Pay Transparency, and 2026 Trends Johnson Great Room

Making Metrics Meaningful: Defining Expectations for Organizational Success..... Heritage Gallery

Securing Nonprofit Finances and Data in a High-Risk Cyber Landscape..... University Hall

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. / Round II Breakout Sessions

Becoming a Numbers Person (When You're Not One) Thomas Swain Room

Federal Grant Funding: Navigating Compliance..... Minnesota Room

Financial Presentations to the Board..... Heritage Gallery

From Silos to Synergy: Bridging Program and Fiscal..... University Hall

Innovative Staffing Models for Nonprofit Finance Functions Johnson Great Room

Surviving Audits: An Executive Director's MBA JourneySki-U-Mah Room

12:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. / Lunch, Table Conversations, Presentation.....Memorial Hall

Lunchtime Presentation: *Fraud: It's Not What You Think...*

with MCN Senior Advisor for Policy and Impact Marie Ellis, and MCN Vice President Kari Aanestad

During this lunchtime address, MCN staff will share the latest findings from research on high-profile cases of recent fraud, challenge assumptions, and highlight opportunities for setting the record straight.

2 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. / Round III Breakout Sessions

A Practical Path and Local Examples of Building Shared Financial Leadership..... Thomas Swain Room

Bringing a 4-Day, 32-Hour Workweek to Your OrganizationSki-U-Mah Room

Building Financial Resilience: Key Metrics for Nonprofit Sustainability..... Johnson Great Room

P&L Health: Managing and Creating Margin in Your Nonprofit University Hall

Supporting Entrepreneurs and Financial Leaders Overcoming Financial Trauma..... Minnesota Room

Unlearning Compliance: Decolonizing Finance Across Cultures Heritage Gallery

3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. / Round IV Breakout Sessions

Beyond the Audit: How One Nonprofit Built a Strategic Partnership with Their CPA Heritage Gallery

Building Shared Financial Leadership with Nonprofit Board and Staff University Hall

Closing the Year with Accrual Confidence.....Ski-U-Mah Room

The Five Happy Habits: Fueling Resilience & Renewal for Finance Leaders..... Minnesota Room

Show Me the Story (Not the Spreadsheet) Thomas Swain Room

Trust But Verify: Building a Fraud-Resilient Culture..... Johnson Great Room

★ Keynote Address

From 90-Day Triage to 10-Year Resilience: Finance, Trust, and Strategy in Minnesota's New Reality

Minnesota nonprofits are facing a uniquely unstable moment, with ICE activity, federal policy threats, AI disruption, racial justice upheaval, and lingering impacts of COVID recovery creating a level of volatility not seen elsewhere. Yet despite this pressure, our sector continues to deliver essential services while maintaining community trust.

Hear from leaders with deep knowledge of nonprofit finances as they discuss ways to stay resilient during times of crisis, and how to build an unshakable financial infrastructure that can power your nonprofit through whatever the future might hold.



**Moderated by
MCN President &
CEO Nonoko Sato**



Sam Amundson

Sam Amundson is Controller at MAHUBE-OTWA, serving five northwest Minnesota counties. She oversees more than 60 federal, state, local, and philanthropic grants, collaborating with program leaders, administration, executives, and partners. A generative fiscal leader, she bridges program and finance and supports nonprofits as MCN Co-Board Chair and volunteers on boards locally.



Michelle Ness

Michelle Ness is the Executive Director at PRISM, a nonprofit social service agency in Golden Valley that provides food, housing, and basic needs services. She received her MSW from the University of Minnesota and previously worked at Neighborhood House and Tubman. She is committed to providing collaborative services that are responsive, dignified, and grounded in professionalism.



LeeAnn Rasachak

LeeAnn Rasachak is CEO of WomenVenture, a women-focused Community Development Financial Institution and SBA Women's Business Center expanding training and capital access for entrepreneurs. A former Fortune 500 marketing transformation and strategy leader, she chairs the Minnesota CDFI Coalition and serves on multiple nonprofit boards advancing economic opportunity and resilience statewide.



Nelima Sitati Munene

Nelima Sitati Munene is Executive Director of ACER and a longtime advocate for racial and economic equity. With over 20 years of community organizing and policy experience, she builds bridges between government and African heritage communities, leading initiatives in housing, civic engagement, and leadership development across the region.

10:15 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.

ROUND I BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Bridging Financial Wellbeing Gaps in Your Workforce

Track: HR, People & Culture

Room: Minnesota Room

Explore how nonprofits can design inclusive financial wellbeing programs that meet employees where they are, regardless of income, life stage, or financial literacy. You will learn how to identify and address organizational and individual financial wellbeing gaps; layer tailored solutions—from budgeting tools to retirement planning education—to support diverse employee needs; and move from intention to action by implementing equitable, scalable financial wellbeing strategies.

Presented by: Scott Koenigsnecht, Area Vice President, Registered Representative, Gallagher

Clear & Compliant: 3 Ways to Track Restricted Funds

Track: Compliance, Risk Management & Resilience

Room: Ski-U-Mah Room

Until those MYGOD! (Multi-Year General Operating Dollar) grants become the norm, nonprofits need to be able to track and budget restricted grants that cross fiscal years. This session will introduce GAAP-compliant methods for doing this, right within QuickBooks. You'll learn three ways to track restricted contributions and releases, how to choose the right structure for your organization, and tips to align your file structure with GAAP and internal reporting needs.

Presented by: Megan Genest Tarnow, Principal, DaisyBee Consulting

From Transparency to Trust: Engaging Staff in Finances

Track: Collaboration & Leadership

Room: Thomas Swain Room

In uncertain financial times, transparency alone isn't enough—staff need to be active participants in financial problem-solving. Learn about how Hope Community has evolved from sharing quarterly budget updates to engaging over half their staff in a biweekly finance committee. Through collaborative budgeting, shared decision frameworks, and open discussion of trade-offs, they've built a culture of trust and adaptability that strengthens their organization's resilience.

Presented by: Rachel Martinez, Director of HR and Organizational Culture, J.T. Evans, Youth Leadership & Learning Manager, Hope Community

Key Compensation Decisions Facing MN Nonprofits: PFML, Pay Transparency, and 2026 Trends

Track: HR, People & Culture

Room: Johnson Great

Minnesota nonprofits are navigating new Paid Family & Medical Leave (PFML) requirements, growing expectations around pay transparency, and shifting compensation strategies. This session highlights key PFML decision points, including state versus private plans, payroll tax budgeting, and alignment with FMLA, PTO, and disability programs. It also explores practical pay transparency models relevant to nonprofits and concludes with a brief look at compensation trends shaping 2026, including skills-based pay, AI-supported planning, and purpose-driven benefits.

Presented by: Kathy Laws, HRCO Director, Total Rewards & HRIS, CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen LLP)

Don't miss the lunchtime presentation
"Fraud: It's Not What You Think..."
beginning at 1 p.m. in Memorial Hall.

Making Metrics Meaningful: Defining Expectations for Organizational Success

Track: Compliance, Risk Management & Resilience
Room: Heritage Gallery

Nonprofit leaders often face implicit assumptions about staff roles, goals, and organizational priorities. This session explores how Wilder Research made these expectations explicit by aligning key performance indicators (KPIs) and data-driven decision-making with its evolving business model. You will see how Wilder Research defines and operationalizes KPI selection, collects and tracks data, and translates quantitative metrics into actionable insights. You will leave with practical examples for using KPIs not just to measure performance, but to tell a story, guide decisions, and ensure everyone on the team understands and contributes to organizational success.

Presented by: Kristin Dillon, Associate Director of Research, Alissa Jones, Associate Director of Operations, and Shannon McLevish, Wilder Research

Securing Nonprofit Finances and Data in a High-Risk Cyber Landscape

Track: Compliance, Risk Management & Resilience
Room: University Hall

Nonprofits are now the second most targeted sector for cyberattacks, according to the Okta 2025 State of Nonprofits report. With limited resources and growing digital exposure, these organizations face increasing threats to their financial and data security. Hear from a panel of experts from accounting, IT, and cyber insurance who will share practical, cross-functional strategies to help nonprofits defend against cyber risks. You will gain insights into the current threat landscape, learn how to implement cost-effective security measures, and understand the critical role of cyber insurance. Leave with actionable steps to strengthen your cybersecurity posture and protect your mission-driven work.

Presented by: Dave Nozal, IT Director, and Ellie O'Brien, CFO, Propel Nonprofits; Zach Freeman, SVP - Management Liability, Professional Liability & Cyber Practice Leader, Christensen Group Insurance

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

ROUND II BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Becoming a Numbers Person (When You're Not One)

Track: Collaboration & Leadership
Room: Thomas Swain Room

As your career evolves—whether you started in programs, policy, fundraising, or communications—you eventually need finance skills to have a seat at the table where decisions are made. Suddenly, you're expected to manage budgets, make financial choices, and talk confidently about money, even if no one ever taught you how. And in mission-driven work, the truth is simple: no money, no mission. This session is for emerging leaders, new executive directors, and people from historically marginalized backgrounds—especially women—who are learning financial leadership on the job. We'll talk honestly about owning what you don't know, building financial confidence, and creating inclusive budget processes that help your whole team—and mission—thrive.

Presented by: Ella Daniels, Executive Director, Mill City Farmers Market

Federal Grant Funding: Navigating Compliance

Track: Compliance, Risk Management & Resilience
Room: Minnesota Room

Federal grant noncompliance can be a serious issue, and knowing and understanding compliance requirements helps maximize the impact of every dollar you receive. Learn how to assess whether your entity is properly meeting its federal grant compliance requirements. We will cover the October 2024 and 2025 changes to 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, potential grant termination implications and procedures, indirect cost rates and application, policies and procedures that need to be in place, as well as grants management best practices.

Presented by: Rebecca Field, Principal, Grant Compliance Services, CliftonLarsonAllen LLP

Financial Presentations to the Board

Track: Collaboration & Leadership

Room: Heritage Gallery

Presenting financials to the board can be a daunting and unclear assignment. What do you include, and how do you present the information? After attending this session, you will gain a clear understanding of how to present the financial health of your organization in a simple and understandable way that both finance and non-finance board members will understand.

Presented by: Keven Ambrus, Chief Financial Officer, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation

From Silos to Synergy: Bridging Program and Fiscal

Track: Collaboration & Leadership

Room: University Hall

Learn how generative thinking can bridge the divide between program and finance, transforming organizational challenges into strategic opportunities. You will unpack four key levers—relationship building, organizational systems, professional development, and business continuity—that drive integration and resilience. Whether you're navigating budget constraints or scaling your mission, this session offers practical insights to help your organization thrive in turbulent times.

Presented by: Sam Amundson, Controller, MAHUBE-OTWA CAP; Michelle Wilkowski, Head Start Director, MAHUBE-OTWA CAP

Innovative Staffing Models for Nonprofit Finance Functions

Track: HR, People & Culture

Room: Johnson Great Room

Gone are the days where the ideal nonprofit staffing model takes a “butts in seats” perspective. With ever-changing technology, a tight labor market, and limited resources, nonprofit finance teams need to be efficient, agile, and tech-savvy to meet their organizations' needs. In this session, we will explore various staffing models, including outsourcing, independent contractors, fractional staffing, and traditional full-time employees (and any combination of these). You will gain an understanding of several of these types of staffing models and their pros and cons. Learn how to evaluate various parts of the finance function for optimal staffing and consider how to optimize it within your own organization.

Presented by: Matt Haggerty, Managing Director, Not-for-Profit Managed Services, Baker Tilly

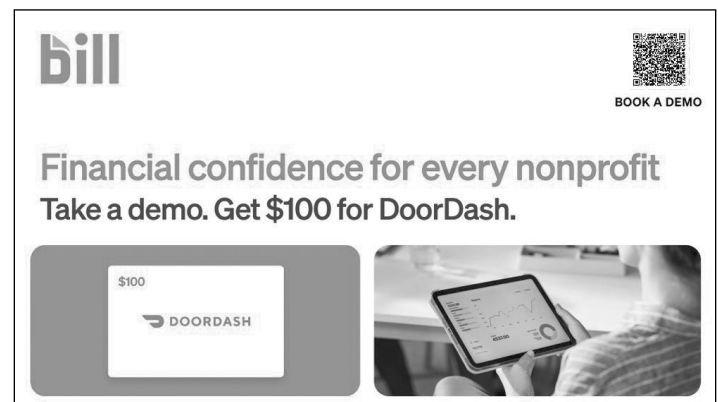
Surviving Audits: An Executive Director's MBA Journey

Track: Compliance, Risk Management & Resilience

Room: Ski-U-Mah Room

Join us for an insightful session exploring the dynamic journey of an executive director who transformed audit challenges into opportunities for growth and learning, eventually leading to an auditing MBA. This session will delve into practical strategies for managing audit pressures, enhancing organizational compliance, and leveraging these experiences to succeed in future compliance requirements. Attendees will gain valuable insights into balancing professional responsibilities with personal growth ambitions, ultimately achieving both audit success and academic excellence. Whether you're aiming to enhance your leadership skills or nervous about surviving your first audit, this session offers actionable advice for turning challenges into achievements.

Presented by: Trey Kockelman, Abdo; Kelli Foster Warder, Executive Artistic Director, Artistry Theater & Visual Arts

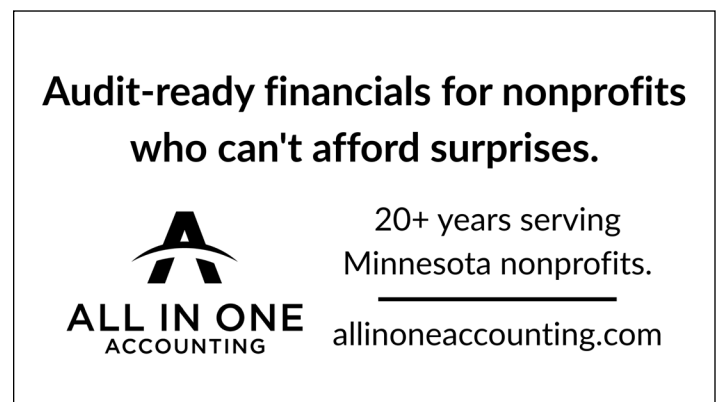


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2 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.

ROUND III BREAKOUT SESSIONS

A Practical Path and Local Examples of Building Shared Financial Leadership

Track: Collaboration & Leadership

Room: Thomas Swain Room

Through centering collective financial leadership, your organization can carry out your values while building a staff that is prepared to respond to 2026's changing financial environment. Join local nonprofits Valley Outreach and Accola as they share the steps they took to increase their individual and organizational financial leadership capacity. Map and model your own journey based on their lessons learned. You will leave with a templated process for developing and deepening capacity for financial leadership at all levels of the organization.

Presented by: Michael Anderson, Founder and Managing Partner, Tangelo Tree Consulting; Matt Halley, President, Accola; Jenn Kane, Director of Finance & Administration, Valley Outreach

Bringing a 4-Day, 32-Hour Workweek to Your Organization

Track: HR, People & Culture

Room: Ski-U-Mah Room

Responding to crisis levels of overwork, disconnection, and burnout, organizations and their employees are exploring new approaches to work that can better support engagement and retention. The solution proven to improve wellbeing, productivity, and retention across industries is the 4-day, 32-hour workweek. Hear from nonprofit leaders who participated in a practice community to figure out how to adopt the 4-day workweek at their organizations. They'll share their experiences, an introduction to the model, and a chance to explore how it could work for your organization.

Presented by: Daisy Morin, Employer Engagement Lead, WorkFour; Laura Isdahl, WorkFour MN

Building Financial Resilience: Key Metrics for Nonprofit Sustainability

Track: Compliance, Risk Management & Resilience

Room: Johnson Great Room

As funding landscapes shift and economic pressures mount, nonprofit leaders need stronger financial foundations to sustain their missions and seize opportunities. This session equips executive directors, senior staff, and board members with practical frameworks for monitoring and improving organizational financial health. Through analysis of nonprofit examples, participants will explore how to evaluate financial performance using key metrics and indicators, addressing both data interpretation and the factors driving outcomes. The session includes insights on building institutional infrastructure: board-approved policies, financial reserves strategies, and oversight mechanisms that protect organizational stability.

Presented by: Dean Dalzell, Vice President, All In One Accounting; Jane Graupman, Executive Director, International Institute of Minnesota

P&L Health: Managing and Creating Margin in Your Nonprofit

Track: Compliance, Risk Management & Resilience

Room: University Hall

Money is mission, and a healthy P&L goes a long way toward accomplishing any nonprofit mission. Managing both expenses and profitability can generate improvements to the bottom line, but knowing where to begin and what levers to pull can be a daunting challenge. Learn how Homeward Bound, a nonprofit that supports adults with disabilities, used a principled and strategic team approach to move from red to black using fundamental practices important for any nonprofit, including but not limited to holistic margin management, revenue analysis, and unit cost review.

Presented by: Rob Edwards, President and CEO, Homeward Bound; Theresa Bluhm, CFO, Homeward Bound

Supporting Entrepreneurs and Financial Leaders Overcoming Financial Trauma

Track: HR, People & Culture
Room: Minnesota Room

Let's come together to share insights, challenges, and successes in addressing financial trauma and shame. As a group, you will explore which strategies have worked, which haven't, and what's next in helping clients heal and build financial confidence. We'll discuss the lasting impact of systemic barriers and generational inequities, as well as the personal shame and fear many feel around money decisions. Through candid conversation, reflection, and shared experiences, we'll examine: How can we acknowledge and release financial trauma? What important topics are we overlooking? This session is a space to learn from each other, confront difficult questions, and leave with practical ideas for supporting clients as they reclaim financial empowerment.

Renay Dossman, President and CEO, Neighborhood Development Center (NDC); Kizzy Downie, CEO, Model Cities

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Unlearning Compliance: Decolonizing Finance Across Cultures

Track: Compliance, Risk Management & Resilience
Room: Heritage Gallery

What happens when compliance meets culture? In this session, you will learn what it means for a white-led organization to decolonize its financial practices while working in partnership with Indigenous culture bearers through the Honoring Dakota Project. Drawing from real experiences, such as navigating culturally appropriate payments, redefining documentation, and rebuilding trust with auditors, funders and Indigenous partners, this session will explore lessons learned when traditional systems of proof and control cause harm.

Presented by: Emily Foos, Executive Director, Red Wing Arts

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3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

ROUND IV BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Beyond the Audit: How One Nonprofit Built a Strategic Partnership with Their CPA

Track: Compliance, Risk Management & Resilience

Room: Heritage Gallery

In a sector where resources are tight and missions are bold, nonprofits must expect more from their professional service providers. This session explores the evolving relationship between Michael Allen, executive director of My Very Own Bed, and Joe Wallis, a nonprofit CPA and partner at a leading firm. Over the past few years, their collaboration has gone far beyond the audit—covering sector trends, strategic decision-making, and meaningful introductions across the nonprofit ecosystem. Learn how small but growing organizations can leverage their auditor relationship to drive impact, build capacity, and stay ahead of the curve.

Presented by: Joe Wallis, CPA, Abdo, LLP; Michael Allen, Executive Director, My Very Own Bed

Building Shared Financial Leadership with Nonprofit Board and Staff

Track: Collaboration & Leadership

Room: University Hall

Strong financial leadership is not just the responsibility of the finance team, it's a shared commitment across nonprofit staff and board members as well. In this workshop, you will explore how transparent and intentional financial communication can empower your nonprofit, strengthen fiduciary responsibility, and support professional development. Learn why sharing financial information matters, how it connects to individual roles, and how it supports strategic decision-making. We'll explore practical tools and strategies for presenting financial data in digestible, contextualized formats that foster understanding and engagement even among those with limited financial experience. You will leave with actionable strategies and examples to make financial information meaningful, inclusive, and empowering by turning numbers into narratives that support shared leadership and organizational success.

Presented by: Ellie O'Brien, Vice President & Chief Financial Officer, Propel Nonprofits

Closing the Year with Accrual Confidence

Track: Compliance, Risk Management & Resilience

Room: Ski-U-Mah Room

Closing out the fiscal year with accuracy is essential for nonprofit financial health. This session will walk through key accrual entries—such as accounts payable, receivables, deferred revenue, and accrued payroll—and explain why they matter. You'll also learn what auditors typically request during year-end, including documentation for estimates, reconciliations, and internal controls. You will leave this session knowing common year-end accrual entries and their purpose, what auditors look for during year-end close, and how to access and apply resources to strengthen your closing procedures.

Presented by: Nathan Maack, Nonprofit Audit Manager, Abdo

The Five Happy Habits: Fueling Resilience & Renewal for Finance Leaders

Track: HR, People & Culture

Room: Minnesota Room

Leading finances for a Minnesota nonprofit isn't for the faint of heart as funding is unpredictable, teams are stretched thin, and community needs keep growing. It's easy to feel drained while carrying so much responsibility. But what if sustaining your mission — and yourself — lies in a few simple, science-backed habits? In this uplifting keynote, you will learn The 5 Happy Habits, proven strategies to combat burnout, build resilience, and inspire teams. Grounded in psychology, neurology, and sociology, walk away with habits and insights that will help you reframe challenges, stay energized, and find joy in the important work you do every day.

Presented by: Tom Guetzke, The Happologist, Live Happy, Inc.

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The Creative Planning nonprofit team works with over 400 nonprofit organizations, participates in and speaks at professional conferences and serves as board members and volunteers for a variety of nonprofits in the communities where they live. We help nonprofits by providing accounting and payroll services, audits, consulting, IT and cyber security, ERP software implementation, retirement plan advisory and more.

Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

www.minnesotanonprofits.org

The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) was founded in 1987 to meet the increasing information needs of nonprofits and to convene nonprofits to address issues facing the sector. It is the largest state association of nonprofits in the U.S. Through MCN, nonprofits join together across interest areas to work on issues of common concern to all.

Mutual of America

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Mutual of America has partnered with the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and their members for over 20 years! We offer a wide variety of retirement plans for employers and organizations of all types and size, including 401(k) Plans, 403(b) Plans, Defined Contribution Plans, SEP IRAs, and SIMPLE IRAs. We work directly with our clients, so there are no brokers or third-party administrators required.

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Propel Nonprofits

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Propel Nonprofits fuels the impact and effectiveness of nonprofits with guidance, expertise, and capital. Propel Nonprofits provides a holistic approach to meet your nonprofit's most pressing needs to more closely link strategy, governance, and finance.

Stearns Bank

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