



THE NONPROFIT
ASSOCIATION OF
OREGON

Connect. Improve. Advance.

Researcher Request for Proposal

Northwest Health Foundation (NWHF) and Nonprofit Association of Oregon (NAO) seek foundational research and understanding of how states and other localities, outside of Oregon, have worked to address wage disparities and high turnover within the nonprofit sector.

Organization Overviews

Northwest Health Foundation (NWHF) exists to advance, support and promote the health of the people of Oregon and Southwest Washington. Our foundation has been working since 1997, investing in programs and projects designed to improve the health of the people of Oregon, as well as Clark, Cowlitz, Pacific, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties in Southwest Washington.

Northwest Health Foundation is unique among many foundations. A portion of our resources can be used to advance policies that improve the health of our communities through advocacy, legislative influence, and participation in political campaigns and elections. Many of the organizations we support address the root causes of health through community-driven solutions. NWHF is also actively engaged in advocating for sound policies that protect health.

Northwest Health Foundation believes that the staff and board of an organization should reflect the communities it serves. We also believe our cultural, linguistic and community identities make our organization stronger, smarter and more effective. We are a dynamic staff of seven across a range of identities. Our staff actively participate in our community, including serving on boards, raising families and otherwise working to make our region a better place outside the workday. We are governed by an engaged, thoughtful board of nine directors.

The Foundation is committed to the principles of equal employment opportunity and compliance with all federal, state and local laws concerning employment discrimination,

including the Americans with Disabilities Act. To this end, NWHF ensures equal opportunity to all employees and applicants regardless of race, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, national origin or ancestry, citizenship, lawful alien status, physical, mental and medical disability, veteran status or liability for service in the United States Armed Forces.

More information about Northwest Health Foundation can be found at <https://northwesthealth.org/>.

The Nonprofit Association of Oregon (NAO) is the statewide nonprofit membership organization representing and supporting charitable nonprofits of all sizes, geographic locations and missions across Oregon.

NAO's mission is to serve public benefit nonprofits by strengthening the collective voice, leadership, and capacity of nonprofits to enrich the lives of all Oregonians. NAO's vision is that Oregon's nonprofits are visible and valued as essential contributors to society. NAO is deeply invested in their core values: Collaboration, Equity and Inclusion, Excellence, Impact, Learning, Service and Stewardship.

NAO ensures a future in which Oregon nonprofits are visible and valued as essential contributors to our society. We strive to connect, improve and advance all nonprofits to help build a thriving and vital Oregon.

NAO serves the needs of the nonprofit sector through our work in advocacy, convening, disseminating Principles and Practices for Nonprofit Excellence, capacity building and thought leadership.

More information about NAO can be found at <https://nonprofitoregon.org>.

Project Overview

NWHF and NAO interact with hundreds of nonprofit community-based organizations (CBOs) and their staff on a regular basis. These organizations are similar to ours with goals that touch upon healthy communities, culturally responsive services and equitable policies. Nonprofits are critical to these goals, and by extension, their staff and volunteers.

Both of our organizations have front row seats to nonprofit staff suffering burnout and leaving the sector. The factors are many, but in part due to higher wages and better benefits offered elsewhere, understaffed programs and administration, and over complicated contracting practices by public sector and philanthropic partners. This burnout and churn reduce institutional memory and the capacity of organizations to tackle their missions. These issues existed prior to the pandemic and these last two years have worsened them—crystallized the need to act.

In 2021, [NAO surveyed nonprofit organizations](#) in concert with the National Council of Nonprofits. The survey focused on the current workforce shortage affecting the nonprofit sector, asking many questions, including, “What is your nonprofit’s current job vacancy rate?” One in three nonprofits shared job vacancy rates of between 10% and 19% and a troubling 43% responded that they had job openings for over 20% of their positions.

In order for nonprofits to be able to retain and hire staff they need to address concerns including paying competitive, living-wages for the required work. This will take fundamental shifts in the way nonprofits fund their work, as well as how government, foundations, and private funders support that work.

There are many elements to improving wages, benefits and operations in CBOs. Many can be found in Class Action’s great 2019 report, [Staffing the Mission: Improving Jobs in the Nonprofit Sector](#). However, these solutions tend to focus at the organizational-level, requiring funder-by-funder and organization-by-organization approaches. We seek more systemic, sectoral solutions.

Goals

We’re exploring a community-based nonprofit modernization act—a legislative path to systemically fix underpayment, reduce administrative burden and raise wages in community-based nonprofits (CBOs). We define CBOs as nonprofits that work at the local level to improve life for residents through direct services, advocacy, civic engagement and other activities.

Federal, state, and local governments rely on nonprofit organizations as key partners in implementing programs and providing services to the public, such as healthcare, human services, and housing-related services. In other words, government is a significant funder of CBOs. But it underpays and overburdens. Government contracts for social, economic and other services pay about 70 cents on the dollar of a nonprofit’s direct program expenses, and less than 50 cents on the dollar of its indirect expenses.

The act could do the following:

- Establish wage requirements/standards in public CBO contracting that may apply to multiple jurisdictions, or at least Oregon State grant recipients and subrecipients.
- Implement the 2014 Federal OMB Uniform Guidance across agencies, which is intended to ensure consistent and fair contracting processes, streamline administration and clarify costs.
- Address other efficiencies as identified by CBOs and government staff.
- Codify definitions of “culturally-responsive services” and “culturally-specific organizations” across government agencies.

Objective/Need

As we start this process, we need foundational research and understanding of other states who have approached this type of work – successfully or not. We also need to understand the legal options we have within the state of Oregon.

We are looking to hire a researcher to:

1. Identify the processes, specific language, and successes other jurisdictions have used to address these wage disparities and high turnover rates in the nonprofit sector through their mechanisms for contracting and granting support. And what are the legal options in Oregon
2. Identify and collect potential resources, contacts of leaders and coalitions across the country who have or are currently leading this work.
3. Create a glossary of definitions and identify statutory concept or laws that meet the identified goals of this project.
4. Include all material identified and provide contacts and bibliography.

Target Audience

Our first audience is the Advisory Council, a group of nonprofit leaders who will guide the process and the legislative concept.

Our second priority audience is nonprofits throughout the state of Oregon who we hope will read the report.

Selection Criteria

We look to hire a researcher who...

- Can work independently after receiving direction from NWHF staff
- Has a commitment to equity and racial justice
- Has experience with legislative research

Timeline and Key Dates

Rolling proposal submission deadline

Spring:

- Conduct research
- Check-ins with NWHF Public Affairs Manager

5/15/22: Final Report Deadline

Project Budget

The budget for the research portion of the project, approved by the client, is \$15,000-\$20,000.

Proposal Requirements

Please provide the following information in your proposal:

- Why you or your company is ideal for this particular project
- Portfolio work in similar endeavors
- Your methodology for researching and producing the report
- Team members in charge of the report (specify background and capabilities)
- Outsourced tasks

Contact Information

Please, submit your proposal and any questions you may have to:

Felicita Montebianco
Public Affairs Manager
felicita@northwesthealth.org
Cell: 971.409.4474

Original posting: <https://www.northwesthealth.org/news/exploring-a-nonprofit-modernization-act>