

# Non-profits have a lot to provide job seekers

1 million charitable organizations in U.S. have all sorts of posts

By Patricia Bathurst  
SPECIAL FOR THE REPUBLIC

Although it's a dandy asset, money isn't everything.

That's only one reason to consider careers in the non-profit sector.

There are a lot of diverse opportunities within non-profit organizations, which are numerous. According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics, there are more than 1 million charitable organizations in the U.S.

Nearly 32,000 of these groups are in Arizona, says Arizona State University's Center for Nonprofit Leadership Management, citing the Arizona Corporation Commission.

That's about a 43 percent increase in non-profit groups between 1996 and 2006, the center said.

"Non-profit organizations can, in fact, be profitable, in a certain respect," said Mary Teagarden, professor of global strategy at the Thunderbird Graduate School of Management in Phoenix. "But they have very different objectives from a purely for-profit business."

Janet Otte, has worked with Southwest Human Development, or SWHD, in Phoenix for more than 20 years. Her work as the organization's human-resources director, she said, differs little from a similar position in the for-profit world.

With about 600 employees, SWHD provides a diverse array of services for young children, including disabled kids, and

## Want to work for a non-profit?

Here are some tips:

- » Look for organizations whose employees openly show enthusiasm and passion for their work.
- » Make sure the organization has a mission that's clearly communicated.
- » Be certain you feel personally aligned with that mission.
- » Make sure they can answer fundamental business questions, articulate the challenges they face and describe how they are addressing those challenges.
- » Consider volunteering before you apply for or accept a position to see if you are a good fit for the job and the organization.

Source: Mary Teagarden, professor of global strategy at the Thunderbird Graduate School of Management.

their families.

"We have positions across the board," Otte said.

These include teaching and teaching assistants jobs for the Head Start program, health-care workers for home visiting, counselors, social workers and therapists, as well as jobs in management and administration.

Pat Snyder, director of human resources at St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance in Phoenix, echoed that sentiment.

With nearly 160 employees, the organization employs a diverse array of workers, from

drivers and warehouse workers to administrative and management professionals.

"Like many non-profits, our salary scales are about 80 percent of that paid in the corporate world," Snyder said. "But they are gradually increasing, and I anticipate they'll continue to increase as competition for skilled employees increases."

Both Otte and Snyder pointed to their respective organization's benefits as a distinct difference from many similarly sized companies. St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance, for instance, covers 90 percent of medical benefit insurance, while SWHD covers it in full.

Both offer generous vacation and leave packages.

Snyder also said that although some positions with his organization have lower hourly pay rates, the difference is more than offset by benefit coverage.

"For instance, a position with us may pay around \$13 an hour, while a comparable position at a private, for-profit company may be about \$15 an hour," he said. "But our benefits may add somewhere between \$5 to \$6 on top of that."

This, Teagarden said, is typical.

"Salaries, in fact, are not always necessarily lower," she said. "At many position levels, they can be very comparable, and it is very common for the non-profit sector to offer more benefits."

Reach the writer at  
[www.writinginaz.com](http://www.writinginaz.com).