



## NPT's Best Nonprofits To Work For 2014

*Compensation, communication and development fuel employee satisfaction*

By MARK HRYWNA, PATRICK SULLIVAN & MARTIN C. DAKS

**A**sk almost anyone who works at a nonprofit to tell you the best part about working there and the answer generally will be: the mission. And, that's great. But loving the mission doesn't pay the electric bill.

Employees of nonprofit organizations likely understand that concept. Things such as salary aren't going to be at the same levels of

for-profit companies. They do it for other reasons or find other benefits (monetary or otherwise) that fulfill them in their careers.

Leaders at organizations in the 2014 Best Nonprofits To Work For seem to understand that inclination. What makes an organization a Best Nonprofit To Work For? If you subscribe to the idea of Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, then there are a number of common

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traits among nonprofits on this year's list, regardless of their size, with the best organizations focusing efforts on:

- **Pay, Benefits and Incentives:** Some organizations benchmarked at higher-than-average percentiles for salaries while others provided generous benefits to try to offset potentially lower salaries. Some employees receive incentives and healthy bonuses for reaching goals or going above and beyond.

- **Employee Engagement and Communication:** Leaders at the best organizations often ask their staff what they want, and keep them abreast of what's going on and where the organization is heading.

- **Staff Development and Growth:** When organizations ask their employees what they're looking for, very often it's the ability to grow and learn.

The National Older Worker Career Center (NOWCC) ranked No. 1 overall on this year's list, beating out fellow Arlington, Va., nonprofit AHC, Inc., and Wounded Warrior Project (WWP). Jacksonville, Fla.-based Wounded Warrior had taken the overall crown in the Best Nonprofits study three years running.

The top three organizations overall were an equal mix of the small (15 to 49 employees), medium (50-249) and large (250 or more) categories. Among the 50 organizations in the Best Nonprofits 2014 study, 18 were categorized as small, 25 as medium and seven large.

#### PICKING THE WINNERS

The Best Nonprofits To Work For wasn't a simple nomination process or picking names out of a hat. The program was open to all nonprofits with 501(c)(3) status that have a facility with a minimum of 15 employees, in the United States. Organizations had until Oct. 31, 2013 to register to go through the 2014 assessment.

NPT's BEST NONPROFITS TO WORK FOR Top 50		
Rank	Organization Listing	U.S. Employees
1	National Older Worker Career Center, Inc.	23
2	AHC Inc	61
3	Wounded Warrior Project	420
4	Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands	23
5	Partnership for Public Service	64
6	PRS, Incorporated	73
7	Alzheimer's Association	475
8	DonorsChoose.org	63
9	The Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults	17
10	Young Community Developers, Inc	22
11	PENCIL Foundation	22
12	National Institute of Aerospace	85
13	Make-A-Wish Illinois	41
14	Pathway Homes, Inc.	95
15	Children's Law Center	88
16	American Heart Association	2,857
17	Arts Midwest	22
18	DoSomething.org	45
19	The National Society of Collegiate Scholars	33
20	Community Technology Alliance	19
21	Emmaus Community of Pittsburgh	58
22	The Mission Continues	31
23	Kessler Foundation	102
24	Brighton Center	91
25	SightLife	107
26	Harlem RBI	83
27	Military Officers Association of America	91
28	NeedyMeds Inc.	15
29	Caring Voice Coalition. Inc	44
30	Soles4Souls	37
31	Human Rights Campaign	162
32	Year Up	353
33	Pearl S. Buck International Inc.	16
34	Career Path Services	93
35	Public Health Institute	646
36	Emergence Center Against Domestic Abuse	84
37	Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society	221
38	National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy	29
39	NOLS	183
40	Summer Search	113
41	Space Foundation	44
42	Great Lakes Capital Fund	52
43	Better Business Bureau serving Central, Coastal, Southwest Texas and the Permian Basin	65
44	ZERO - The End of Prostate Cancer	17
45	Catholic Charities of Dallas	133
46	Palm Beach Habilitation Center, Inc.	92
47	Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona	118
48	American Diabetes Association	835
49	iMentor	98
50	The Children's Home of Cincinnati	266

The assessment process was managed for *The NonProfit Times* by Best Companies Group (BCG) in Harrisburg, Pa., an independent workplace research firm specializing in identifying and recognizing great places to work throughout the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

The BCG Employer Questionnaire (EQ) is an 81-question gauntlet used to collect information about benefits, policies, practices and other information. It comprised 25 percent of an organization's overall evaluation. The other 75 percent of the evaluation was derived from a confidential 76-question Employee Engagement & Satisfaction Survey (EESS), which was used to evaluate the workplace experience and organizational culture. More than 10,000 employees working for the nominated organizations were surveyed.

Leaders at organizations that topped the list of Best Places to Work appear to share some common approaches, such as empowering employees and encouraging them to find their own creative solutions.

The operational strategy at NOWCC revolves around cooperation. As a \$24-million operation with 600 constituents and a staff of 24, the No.1 Best Nonprofit To Work For has to be nimble. "That's a lot of work for 24 people to manage," Chief Financial Officer German "Cito" Vanegas.

NOWCC had struggled with internal communication, Vanegas said. When Gregory Merrill joined in 2006 as the new chief executive officer, he listened to employees' needs and concerns. "Communication was one of them. We started using teams from different departments to tackle challenges," Vanegas said.

At The Partnership for Public Service in Washington, D.C., CEO Max Stier said there's a work environment that encour-

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ages “accidental meetings,” so employees can mix with people from other departments and share ideas.

Employees at DonorsChoose can take advantage of the Playground -- a social area at its New York City headquarters that encourages teamwork across departments. Melanie Duppins, senior director of policy and learning, said staff can “reset their creativity by working from the Playground.” Employees also can arrange to arrive a little early or stay late or work from a standing desk or a yoga ball.

Satisfaction with pay and benefits at organizations with fewer than 50 employees tracked with the aggregate of nonprofits on the Best Places list this year, at 89 percent for both. Respondents at small organizations on the list were significantly more satisfied with their pay and benefits than small organizations that did not make the list, which only had 70 percent positive responses, and all organizations that did not make the list, which scored 69 percent.

Small organizations can find it within their budgets to competitively pay employees. High pay is necessary to attract and retain employees, especially in the technology-focused Bay Area in California, according to D.J. Brookter, deputy director of Young Community Developers. The San Francisco-based nonprofit ranked 10th overall on the Best Nonprofits To Work For and was 4th among small organizations. “We have a very educated staff and we make sure to treat them correct,” he said. Of the 22 employees at Young Community Developers, at least half have college degrees, and three have advanced degrees.

Some 92 percent of respondents at small organizations on the list said they were satisfied with their employer’s benefits package, compared to 74 percent of small organizations that were examined but did not make the list. That’s only one percentage point off from all organizations on the list, 93 percent of which responded positively. Of respondents from all organizations not on the list, 69 percent were satisfied with their benefits package.

For organizations that might think their salary offerings lag competitors, they make a point to try to make it up to staff on the benefits end of things.

The Mission Continues in St. Louis, Mo., added a suite of new benefits since last year. “Our health care package is phenomenal across the board when you consider employees are only spending \$5 per month,” said President Spencer Kympton. Benefits include vision and dental. Between last year’s Best Places survey and this year’s, the organization added an employer match of up to 3 percent for its 401(k) plan, as well as long-term disability and life insurance at no cost to workers. It also did not increase health insurance premiums for staff, Kympton said, in spite of rising healthcare costs this year.

Large organizations such as the Alzheimer’s Association and the American Diabetes Association made commit-

ments to offering generous matching contributions to retirement plans. While matching contributions were scaled back or suspended after the economy declined in 2008, the nonprofits were able to eventually restore them retroactively.

The board of Year Up has made 100-percent employer-paid health benefits a key a priority for the organization, even reallocating money elsewhere after the recession to keep health benefits, according to Sara Holt, director of capacity building and recruitment at Year Up in Boston,

Mass. “I’m not sure how much it attracts people but it definitely helps hire people,” she said, as well as retain employees.

New employees at Year Up get three weeks vacation in their first year, which increases to four weeks after the first year. “The balance people can find between their work and life is well met but we’re also really careful about in the early application process to assess what someone’s needs are,” Holt said.

“We don’t just say what are your minimum qualifications, we ask how would

your lifestyle be impacted by joining as a member of the nonprofit group and taking a significant pay cut. So we’re pretty direct about the fact that nonprofits are notoriously trying to sell themselves on the value of the mission but we really need you to be on board financially, and supported, and make sure that’s part of the conversation,” she said. *NPT*



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# Large Organizations

*It's all about staying connected to message*

By MARK HRYWNA

Large nonprofits are faced with unique challenges when it comes to things such as communication, training or employee engagement. You can't typically just walk down the hall and ask a colleague a question or stick your head out of your office and shout an update to the handful of staff. Large nonprofits might have as many staff in a new orientation program as some charities have in their entire organizations.

Leaders at the American Heart Association (AHA) in Dallas, Texas, believe that understanding the organization's mission as part of an employee's foundational knowledge is critical to success. "We make sure that tools are available to really develop that foundational knowledge," said Katherine Neverdousky, vice president, human resources and corporate learning. Having staff disbursed around the country can pose a challenge, she said, making it all the more important to do it consistently for all.

AHA, the largest organization in the study with more than 2,800 employees, ranked 16th overall in the 2014 Best Nonprofits To Work For and 3rd in the large category (250 employees or more). Large organizations in the study emphasized training and orientation for staff and the ability to be competitive with salary and benefits, with many contributing 75 percent, if not full healthcare care benefits.

AHA has shifted some of these training resources to deliver information electronically, available to new employees online, with a mix of activities and experiential learning. AHA rolled out a new on-boarding program for new employees.

American Heart University is a training program where employees can authorize off-the-shelf courses, with training that they can both attend in person as well as participate in online. It also helps minimize costs, Neverdousky said, in some cases cutting down on the need for trainers to travel.

"What makes American Heart a great place to work – it's really the focus on

developing our staff, to be the best that they can be and make sure they're able to communicate our mission," said Neverdousky. "Whether in the form of training and development, or making sure there's greater interaction with supervisors or that they're being paid appropriately for the job they're doing."

Training is critical at the national office of Alzheimer's Association in Chicago, Ill., as it has folded eight traditional chapters into the organization since July, adding some 100 full-time employees. Chapters were able to eliminate back-office and ad-

Grisby said. Most salaries are benchmarked at the 50th percentile, but Alzheimer's Association benchmarks its leadership positions at the 75th percentile or above and closer to the 60th percentile for other positions. "We might not be meeting 100 percent of the market but we're ahead of the market curve," Grisby said, examining comparative data every two to three years to remain competitive. "We're always looking to enhance our benefit programs. Each year we go out to market to make sure employees are not having a huge impact in their paycheck," she said.

represent percentage of positive responses). See the accompanying chart.

2014 LARGE NONPROFITS (250 or more Employees)		
Rank	Company Listing	U.S. Employees
1	Wounded Warrior Project	420
2	Alzheimer's Association	475
3	American Heart Association	2,857
4	Year Up	353
5	Public Health Institute	646
6	American Diabetes Association	835
7	The Children's Home of Cincinnati	266

ministrative tasks, such as benefits processing, while enjoying the national office's benefits and focusing on planning, fundraising and awareness.

Some 26 chapters have been folded into the national organization in recent years, leaving approximately 60 chapters in all, according to Mary E. Grisby, director, human resources operations. Because of so much growth, she said that training is "high on the radar" for the organization, focusing on staff training such as leadership and office skills as they conduct a needs assessment survey to evaluate what staff are seeking and developing a plan to move forward.

"We're leaders in looking at total compensation, in our ability to attract and retain the best employees," Grisby said. "We're able to bring in the right talent because we have those programs to support the talent," she said.

"Where we see ourselves and what we hear from brokers, our benefits programs are very rich compared to competitors,"

Whether cash or extra time off, Grisby said the association has come a long way in making sure employees are taken care of since she started there 10 years ago. The organization provided for a handful of employees during some recent bad weather, ranging from hotel rooms to covering cab fares to ensure a safe commute.

## REPEAT PERFORMANCE

Among large nonprofits (250 employees or more), four organizations repeated as a Best Nonprofit To Work this year: Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), which ranked first overall last year; Alzheimer's Association, Year Up and AHA. Others ranked among large companies this year were Public Health Institute in Oakland, Calif., and The Children's Home of Cincinnati.

Honorees separated themselves from average large organizations most notably in the categories of pay and benefits, leadership and planning, and corporate culture and communications (numbers

On Best List	Not on List
Pay, Benefits 91 (+16)	65
Corporate Culture, Communications 86 (+15)	71
Leadership, Planning 87 (+12)	75
Training, Development, Resources 82 (+9)	73
Relationship with Supervisor 91 (+5)	86
Role Satisfaction 88 (+5)	83
Work Environment 90 (+4)	86
Overall Employee Engagement 88 (+11)	77

Large Best Nonprofits scored better than 93 percent in most every subcategory within Pay and Benefits. Even among two subcategories that didn't score 90 percent ("My pay is fair for the work I perform," and tuition reimbursement benefits) large organizations that made the list were still 20 percent better than those that did not.

American Diabetes Association (ADA) is competitive with its benefits, not only with other nonprofits but against for-profit companies as well, according to Don Laing, senior vice president, human resources at the Alexandria, Va., headquarters.

ADA pays more than 80 percent of the cost of healthcare premiums for employees while also adding a number of features into the plan around wellness benefits and preventative care. Part of it is a more holistic approach, making sure people have opportunities to have various preventative care and physical tests, Laing said.

Several benefits are targeted toward fitness, such as reimbursement for gym memberships, smoking cessation programs and Weight Watchers.

"It's about increasing one's healthiness," Laing said. About 35 to 40 percent

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of the workforce takes advantage of ADA's reimbursement-type programs, compared with the more typical 20 percent that its insurance broker typically sees, he said.

As part of ADA's retirement plan, employees get a contribution equal to 4 percent of base salary and can get an additional 4 percent based on their own contributions. "Regardless of economic times, employees, I think, appreciate we're still making those kinds of contributions to a retirement plan," Laing said. ADA cut back contributions after the economic downturn in 2008 but was able to restore the cuts.

"Certainly it's a balance between benefits, salary and the mix of those two things," Laing said. "We've had for the past

couple of years, a 3-percent merit pool. That's probably lower than what you'd find in some other places, particularly compared to the commercial world. Part of how we're managing it is we're looking at it from a total compensation standpoint: How much do you want to give to Uncle Sam, or take in other forms," Laing said.

For Steven Nardizzi, executive director of Jacksonville, Fla.-based Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), successful organizations boil down to focus on the culture and alignment with mission and attracting, retaining, engaging and supporting incredible people. Growing organizations must give employees opportunities to grow, increase professionalism and build skills, whether they're in management, technology or programs. "We spent a lot of time over

the past three years continuing to add components necessary to add to the organization and to grow," he said.

Growth is one of the most critical challenges for WWP, which has opened as many as five new offices annually and now has 17 offices and counting. To keep up with expansion and keep employees engaged, "team leads" are designated in each office, in addition to their regular job. They "take on the responsibility of ensuring there's a healthy culture in each of our offices," said Nardizzi. They could be managers, coordinators or in some cases staff who answer phones. It's whoever might be the best fit in that office to keep the office engaged.

Team leads get a budget for team building among staff, which is increasingly important, he said, as WWP adds

more offices around the country and overseas, "making sure program staff are aligned, working as a great team." The nonprofit surveys team leads to keep up on how offices are doing, to ensure tools and resources are available to staff, and keeping a healthy office environment that's "aligned with core values and constantly committed to mission," he said.

"I imagine when you're 10 or 40 people, it's very easy to keep everyone in good communication and working well as a team, aligned with mission and values. You start getting to 100, 400, 500, you need to be a lot more thoughtful and purposeful in ensuring that that happens," Nardizzi said. "It's why we added these office leads, why we focus on culture in performance evaluation and all-staff training," he said. *NPT*

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# Medium-Sized Organizations

*Decisions made where they are implemented feed satisfaction*

By MARTIN C. DAKS

Leaders at PRS Inc., offered to help when they found out that Washington, D.C., officials were struggling to implement effective programs for young adults living with serious mental illness.

"We had developed a model in northern Virginia, where we had operated for 50 years, that provided improved outcomes for 18- to 35-year-old clients regarding their return to work and school," said Wendy Gradison, CEO of PRS in McLean, Va., which focuses on assisting adults who suffer from mental illness, substance abuse and other disorders. "We worked with the District of Columbia Department of Behavioral Health to implement a pilot program that started in April 2013, and that is now a part of the certified programs in D.C."

Gradison credits the organization's employees for the success of this program and others. "They're the ones who help to transform lives, one relationship at a time, with each client," she said. "Their partnership with each client is, simply, the key ingredient to our clients' successes."

PRS ranked 3rd on the list of medium-sized organizations (50-249) and 6th overall in the 2014 Best Nonprofits To Work For.

Encouraging employees to have that kind of empathy and creativity requires an effort on everyone's part, she added.

"We require face-to-face supervision a minimum of every other week for every employee," Gradison said. "We also focus on employee well-being and satisfaction in many ways, including providing state-of-the-art equipment, so employees can work with the client in an office, in the community, or in the client's home. We periodically do 'pulse checks' to determine staff satisfaction on several key variables that they have told us really matter to them."

PRS employees' job knowledge, supervisory skills, and professional intelligence are enhanced via internal and external training that uses face-to-face contact, online self-paced courses, classroom settings, and group case studies.

"We also find many ways to say 'thank you' and show our appreciation in a number of ways, including closing the agency one day a year for Staff Appreciation Day, and giving personal notes and gifts on employees' anniversary date of employment that are delivered by the CEO," she said. "We also communicate the fact that PRS is always a work in

employees: autonomy, mastery and flexibility," said Duppins. "To the extent possible, decisions are made at the lowest level by the individuals who will own the outcome. We also encourage employees to master new skills, offering them professional development opportunities and exposing them to great thinkers via our Speaker Series."

dium-sized list and 5th overall) is a non-partisan organization that works to revitalize the federal government by inspiring a new generation to serve and by transforming the way government works. Leaders at the Washington, D.C.-based organization have also thought a lot about the best way to structure their own operations.

"As a mission-based organization we need talented people to do good things," CEO Max Stier said. "Early on, we realized that you have to create the right environment to attract, retain and stimulate those individuals."

That means having conversations with employees about the way their activities fit into the organizational goals, and sharing with staff, in real time, information about why the nonprofit's leaders choose to do things in a certain way, and then incorporating their feedback.

"The goal is to get employees to feel responsible for the whole organization," Stier said. "We also encourage employees to come forward with initiatives and suggestions, and we carefully consider them."

One young woman had an interest in promoting healthy lifestyles, and was encouraged to design an employee wellness program. "She launched a series of workshops that focus on shopping for healthy food, exercises, meditation and other topics," Stier said. "It's become very popular."

The Partnership for Public Service continues to examine its employee motivation programs and continues to look for ways to improve efforts. "You have to be like a shark," Stier said. "If you don't keep pushing forward, you'll drown."

Establishing an environment where collaboration is a hard-wired value has helped to promote employee satisfaction and efficiency at the National Institute of Aerospace (NIA), according to Douglas O. Stanley, president of the research and graduate education institute. The Hampton, Va.-based organization (number 5 on the medium list and 12th overall) conducts leading-edge

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2014 MEDIUM NONPROFITS (50 - 249 Employees)		
Rank	Company Listing	U.S. Employees
1	AHC Inc	61
2	Partnership for Public Service	64
3	PRS, Incorporated	73
4	DonorsChoose.org	63
5	National Institute of Aerospace	85
6	Pathway Homes, Inc.	95
7	Children's Law Center	88
8	Emmaus Community of Pittsburgh	58
9	Kessler Foundation	102
10	Brighton Center	91
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22	Catholic Charities of Dallas	133
23	Palm Beach Habilitation Center, Inc.	92
24	Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona	118
25	iMentor	98

progress. We are never done."

Just because your nonprofit's budget isn't huge doesn't mean you can't do big things for your employees, according to Melanie Duppins, senior director of policy and learning at DonorsChoose.org, a nonprofit that uses crowdsourcing to raise funds for educators and educational institutions.

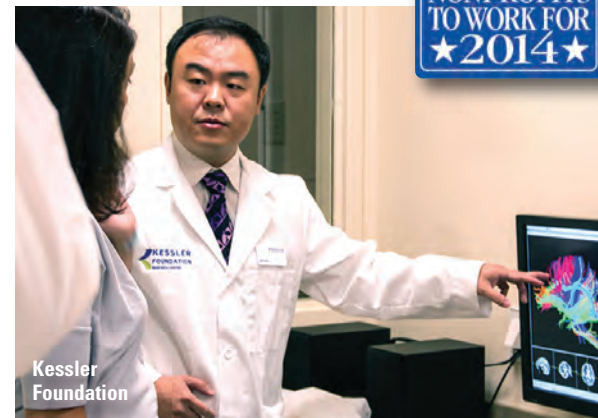
The New York City organization ranked 4th on the list of medium-sized organizations and 8th overall. DonorsChoose.org recently partnered with printer manufacturer MakerBot to place 3D-printers into "hundreds of classrooms" in Brooklyn.

"We deliver three key incentives to

The company's approach to empowering employees has led to some significant bottom-up program innovations. "Some of our best ideas -- digitizing teacher feedback, offering companies opportunities to double their impact via match offers, and several of our top-performing website enhancements -- have come from staff members. When these ideas succeed, our entrepreneurial culture is strengthened and our staff members feel even more comfortable suggesting their best ideas," she said.

Other organizations also work diligently to synchronize external goals with internal operations. The Partnership for Public Service (number 2 on the me-





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aerospace and atmospheric research, develops new technologies and helps inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers.

"We've established an atmosphere where employees feel the value of collaboration," he said. "Our approach takes its cue from Major League Baseball: the executives and managers are the 'staff' that supports the researchers and educators, who are the 'talent' that really makes things happen."

To enhance the culture of collaboration, NIA maintains a relatively flat organizational structure. "Our goals are set forth on a single page, and we maintain open communications among all employees at all levels," said Stanley. "Many of the people who are attracted to our organization

are self-motivated to begin with, and our structure affords them a great deal of autonomy and decision-making authority."

When employees share a common goal of wellness and teamwork, it spills over to their work and performance, since "there is a more positive, human interaction," according to Stania Romain, director of human resources at AHC, Inc. The Arlington, Va., nonprofit topped the list of medium-sized organizations and was number 2 overall. It develops affordable housing in the mid-Atlantic region.

Approximately 75 percent of staff participates in a wellness rewards program. "Officially, it provides a year-end monetary incentive for employees to adopt a healthy lifestyle by engaging in Zumba, kickboxing, mental health, nutrition and other activities. But the exercise pro-

grams also encourage staff members to hang out with each other and to communicate more, benefiting everyone by getting them more involved."

AHC immerses employees in a "culture of customer service" from the start, she added, noting that the organization's new-hire orientation program spells out its commitment to teamwork and communication; dedication to the environment, and a pledge to offer opportunity, respectability and accountability to employees.

"We engage everyone here with consistent communication, and solicitation of their thoughts and suggestions," Romain said. "We encourage employees to send in suggestions by email or on paper, and we recognize their contributions at a year-end party when we dis-

tribute gift cards to everyone who submitted a suggestion."

Employees go above and beyond in a number of ways, she added.

"We work with a number of communities, and at Thanksgiving we hosted celebrations at our housing centers across the region," Romain said. "Many employees participated, cooking and serving 500 turkeys to residents. It gave our employees a chance to meet the families we serve, which meant a lot to everyone who participated, and also gave the people who work 'behind the scenes,' like the accountants, a chance to step out and be seen." *NPT*

*Martin Daks is a freelance business writer in Bethlehem Twp., Pa., and a regular contributor to The NonProfit Times.*

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# Small Organizations

*You shouldn't have to leave the office to have fun*

By PATRICK SULLIVAN

Rich Sagall, M.D., president of NeedyMeds, will trust you 100 percent if you're an employee of the organization. It's up to you to blow it. "I once had an employee ask me, 'How do you know I'm doing what I should?' Because you tell me," Sagall recalled telling a staff member.

NeedyMeds, a Gloucester, Mass., nonprofit that helps people with medical costs, ranked number 28 overall and 12th among small organizations on *The NonProfit Times'* 2014 Best Nonprofits To Work For. The policy is an earned time off model. "We got rid of holidays, vacation days, sick days, personal days. Everyone just has days," Sagall said. "We prefer planning (to take time off), but sometimes it just works that way (on short notice)."

NeedyMeds' staff has a large amount of freedom when it comes to the hours worked. It all comes down to trust. "We strive for a very flexible situation in terms of hours," Sagall said. "Most of the things we do are not emergencies, so employees have flexibility with their hours."

Flexible working arrangements make employees happy, and they're a hallmark of organizations that scored highly on 2014 Best Nonprofits To Work For. Some 89 percent of the smallest Best Places, those with fewer than 50 employees, have flexible hours, compared to 73 percent of small nonprofits that competed but did not make the list.

Small organizations have an advantage by virtue of size in that it's easy for the C-level executives to stay plugged-in to staff. Instead of annual or even quarterly reviews, executives at the National Older Worker Career Center (NOWCC), the number one best place to work overall, meets with staff every month. "It's really great for communication," said Cito Vanegas, CFO of the Arlington, Va.-based NOWCC. "People know what's going on, and it makes people feel involved."

Frequent assessments help employees refine and reach their goals, and give executives a better idea of how employ-

ees are faring in their roles, where they're struggling and how they want to grow. NOWCC's assessment program is called CAMP: Coaching, Assessment and Mentoring Program. "We assess how people are doing so we can provide good feedback," said Vanegas. "We have individual development programs to help people develop their careers,

on the list were happy with their organization's training and development programs, compared to 82 percent of all organizations on the list, 69 percent of small organizations not on the list and 67 percent of all organizations not on the list.

"Each employee gets at least three trainings a year, pending funding, to enhance everybody professionally and per-

undertake.

The company-wide motto of Arts Midwest in Minneapolis, Minn., according to External Relations Manager Anne Romens, is to be curious. "Arts Midwest continues to nurture a lot of growth among our staff," she said of the number 17 overall organization and number seven small nonprofit. "We have many opportunities for professional development and opportunities in the organization for different teams to collaborate with each other, which fosters an open environment where we exchange ideas, help out on projects, learn from each other and work as a group for common goals."

Romens said professional development opportunities range from casual conversations to formal training. "They really vary depending on employees' interests and needs," she said. "It could be scheduling time to have an informational interview with someone you want to add to your network, or more formal workshops and conferences. There are online courses to dig into new technology. Professional development is not seen as something exclusively as a workshop for entry-level employees, but everyone has the opportunity to enhance their career."

The familiarity between executives and staff allows for sharply targeted development opportunities, said Laura Ross, finance and human resources director for the PENCIL Foundation in Nashville, Tenn., number 11 overall and five among small organizations. According to Ross, the organization budgets between \$250 and \$1,000 per person per year for professional development. "We really try to gear (professional development) to the needs of the individual and the job," she said. "It's not one-size-fits-all."

Ross said employees hash out goals each quarter, both on an organization-wide level and as individuals. The cozy atmosphere of a small nonprofit allows organization leadership "to know each employee on a personal level, where their strengths are and how to capitalize on the assets in a way to benefit both the

Continued on following page

2014 SMALL NONPROFITS (15 - 49 Employees)		
Rank	Company Listing	U.S. Employees
1	National Older Worker Career Center, Inc.	23
2	Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands	23
3	The Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults	17
4	Young Community Developers, Inc	22
5	PENCIL Foundation	22
6	Make-A-Wish Illinois	41
7	Arts Midwest	22
8	DoSomething.org	45
9	The National Society of Collegiate Scholars	33
10	Community Technology Alliance	19
11	The Mission Continues	31
12	NeedyMeds Inc.	15
13	Caring Voice Coalition, Inc	44
14	Soles4Souls	37
15	Pearl S. Buck International Inc.	16
16	National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy	29
17	Space Foundation	44
18	ZERO - The End of Prostate Cancer	17



Professional development is not seen as something exclusively for a workshop for entry-level employees, but everyone has the opportunity to enhance their career. --Anne Romens

things like training and identifying people's career growth goals." And, said Vanegas, the CAMP program "is something that the staff created."

Professional development is a touchstone of small organizations on the 2014 Best Nonprofits list. Some 86 percent of survey respondents at small organizations

sonally," said D.J. Brookter, deputy director of Young Community Developers in San Francisco, Calif. YCD came in at number 10 overall and 4th among small organizations. Brookter cited in-house training in grant writing and case management as examples of the types of professional development employees can





Continued from preceding page

person and the organization," she said.

Another advantage small nonprofits have compared to their larger counterparts is the ease of cross-support and communication among the different departments in the organization. Small nonprofits on the Best Nonprofits list rated highly for satisfaction regarding communication and corporate culture, with 92 percent of respondents at those organizations responding positively. That's 16 percentage points more than small nonprofits not on the list. Only 76 percent of those respondents were satisfied with their organizations' communications and corporate culture.

Increased interaction between people of different roles adds to company cohesiveness. Executives at The Mission

Continues, a veterans services nonprofit, must work particularly hard to keep everyone focused, as only 60 percent of employees work at headquarters in St. Louis, Mo. The rest are split between both coasts and Texas.

"There's only so much you can do virtually," said Spencer Kympton, president of the number 22 overall and number 11 small nonprofit. "We want to ensure everyone has an opportunity to engage with each other and reconnect to our core values. That often means we have to be together. We find opportunities to bring the entire staff together. Whether that's around mission-driven like service projects and orientations, or organization-driven like team retreats and vets gala, we consciously make investments in opportunities for team to come together."

Some organizations go beyond cocktail hours and holiday parties to bring employees together. Every six months, the New York City office of DoSomething.org is the setting of a game of musical chairs. "You get 15 seconds to pick a desk," said CEO Nancy Lublin. "You can meet entirely different teams and nobody gets stuck in one spot. It fosters a mutual respect for each other, allows you to always be learning, and it's fun."

Something else DoSomething.org, the eighth ranked small nonprofit and number 18 overall, does differently: there's no human resources. "We have made a conscious decision not to have HR," said Lublin. "If you're frustrated with your manager or not getting enough feedback, you need to talk to your manager. That's fostered good

communication."

Making the work environment fun is a concerted effort for Lublin and her full-time staff of 47. "Too many people think fun is going to a baseball game or drinks after work or cupcakes on your birthday," she said. "We believe the job itself should be fun. You shouldn't have to leave the office to have fun."

Working at a small nonprofit can be enjoyable, and the best small nonprofits to work for do everything they can to make it that way. "It's a matter of the atmosphere I want to foster," said NeedyMeds' Sagall. "If you treat your employees well and treat them like adults and make them part of the process, they'll give you more back. I don't want to be the curmudgeon running things; It's no fun for me." **NPT**

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