

Nonprofit Workforce Shortage Survey

In Nebraska

August 2023

In April 2023, more than 1,600 charitable nonprofit organizations throughout the United States completed the nonprofit workforce shortages survey designed to gauge whether job vacancies continue to be a problem for the missions of those organizations, how the vacancies impact communities, and what actions have been taken and are proposed for alleviating the challenges. Nearly fifty Nebraska nonprofits provided insights that provide the substance of this report.

Key Findings

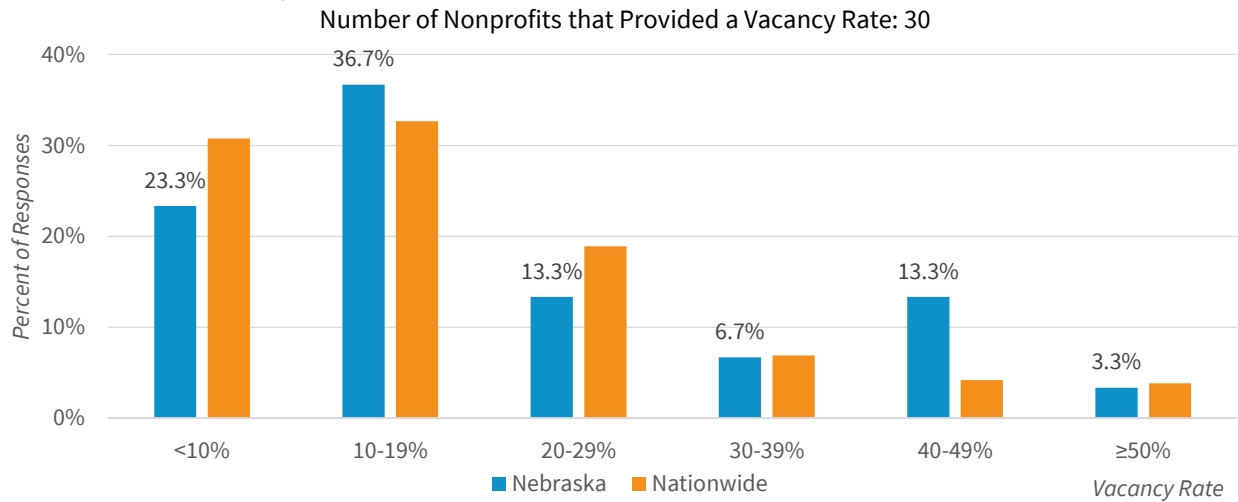
- More than three in five (61.2%) Nebraska nonprofits completing the survey reported experiencing job vacancies.
- 80.0% of respondents with vacancies identified program and service delivery as a category with vacancies.
- Nearly half (49.0%) of nonprofits in the state responded that they have more vacancies compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic, and 24.5% have longer waiting lists for services than in March 2020.
- 69.4% of responding organizations said salary competition affects their ability to recruit and retain employees, followed by budget constraints/insufficient funds (61.2%) and stress/burnout (42.9%).
- More than three out of five (65.3%) respondents anticipate the amount of donations will decline or remain flat for 2023. Well more than half (57.1%) expect the number of donors to decline or remain the same this year.

The Scope of The Problem

One of the key questions in the survey was, “What is your nonprofit’s current job vacancy rate?” Nearly a quarter (23.3%) of Nebraska nonprofits with vacancies shared rates of fewer than 9%, while more than a third (36.7%) responded that their vacancy rates ranged between 10% and 19%. A

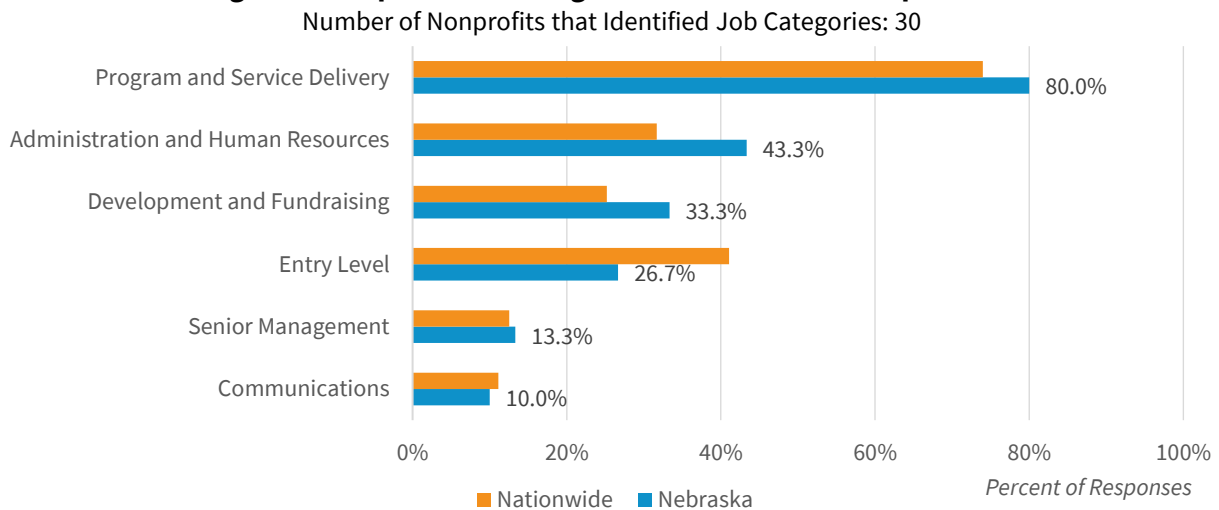
statistic of concern, more than one out of three (36.6%) nonprofits reported a job vacancy rate greater than 20%, including some with more than half of their staff positions open.

Figure 1: Nonprofits' Current Job Vacancy Rate in April 2023



The job category with the most vacancies at Nebraska nonprofits is program and service delivery, which affects 80.0% of nonprofits that reported vacancies. More than two out of five (43.3%) nonprofits also reported vacancies in administration and human resources. Vacancies in development and fundraising impact a third (33.3%) of nonprofits, while 26.7% of Nebraska nonprofits with vacancies cannot fill roles in entry level positions. More than one out of ten nonprofits (13.3%) reported vacancies for senior management, while vacancies in communications roles impact a tenth (10.0%) of nonprofits. Other categories reported are maintenance work, counselors, and healthcare staff.

Figure 2: Nonprofit Job Categories with Vacancies in April 2023

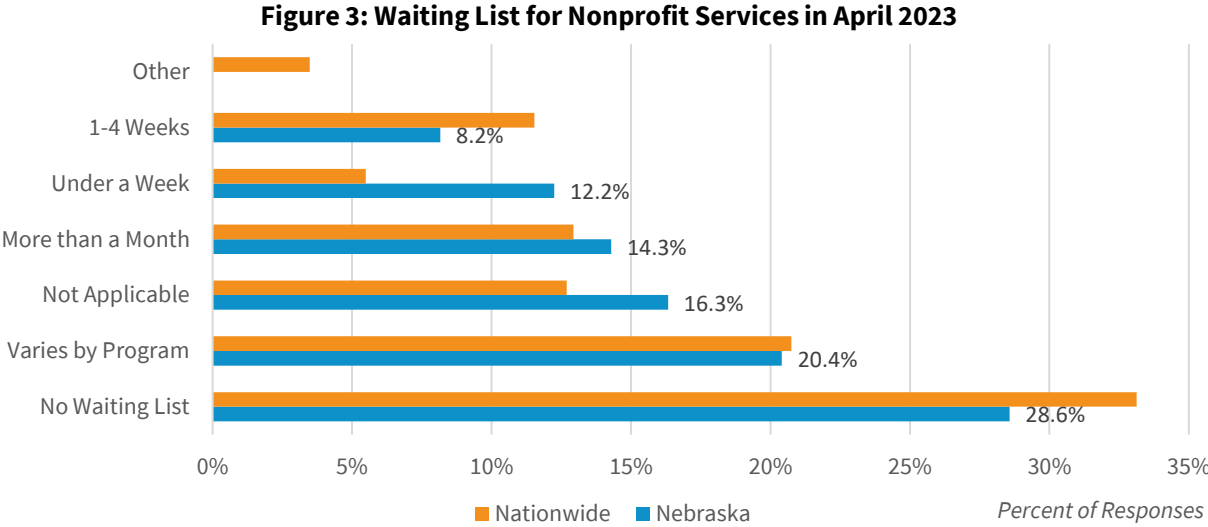


The impact of increased job vacancies is visible in Nebraska’s communities, as demonstrated in comments provided by survey participants. A human services provider observed that their staff have kept up with their work for the most part, but due to “overworking or burnout,” some tasks get pushed back, and over time this puts community members served at risk. Another provider noted

that waiting lists can discourage people who need mental health care from seeking or getting the services they need. An education nonprofit has a waiting list for the first time in their 15-year existence, forcing the organization to change their program delivery and reduce the weeks they will offer services during the summer. A mental health provider unable to find licensed behavioral professionals knows that larger organizations are paying higher salaries for entry level therapists, and they can't compete.

Why It Matters: The Consequences to People, Communities, and Missions

The survey asked participants to share the extent they had been forced to resort to waiting lists or otherwise alter service delivery because of workforce shortages. More than a quarter (28.6%) of nonprofit respondents to the survey indicated that they had no waiting lists for their services. Another fifth (20.4%) explained that they could not give a time frame for waiting lists because the duration for wait times varied by program. Of those who reported a time frame, 14.3% said that their waiting lists are more than a month long, while 8.2% reported waiting times of a few days or weeks. Another 16.3% said that the question is not applicable to their operations.



The survey also asked nonprofits to compare their current challenges to prior experiences. Nearly half (49.0%) of nonprofits in the state responded that they have more vacancies compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic, and a quarter (24.5%) have longer waiting lists for services than in March 2020.

Table 1: Vacancies and Waiting Lists in April 2023 Compared to March 2020

	Changes Observed April 2023 vs. March 2020	Percent of Responses in 2023
Vacancies	More vacancies	49.0%
	Fewer vacancies	4.1%

	Changes Observed April 2023 vs. March 2020	Percent of Responses in 2023
	No change to vacancies	6.1%
Waiting List	Longer waiting list for services	24.5%
	Shorter waiting list for services	4.1%
	No change to waiting list	10.2%
Other	Other	0
	Did not select an option	38.8%

Barriers to Nonprofits Retaining and Recruiting Employees

The three leading factors affecting recruitment and retention for Nebraska charitable organizations are salary competition, budget constraints/insufficient funds, and stress/burnout.

Table 2: Factors Affecting Nonprofit Recruitment and Retention

Factor Affecting Recruitment and Retention	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Salary competition	34	69.4%
Budget constraints/insufficient funds	30	61.2%
Stress/burnout	21	42.9%
Other	10	20.4%
Challenges caused by government grants/contracts	10	20.4%
Not Sure	6	12.2%
Lack of child care	5	12.2%
COVID-19 and vaccinations	3	6.1%

External Factors Impacting Nonprofits

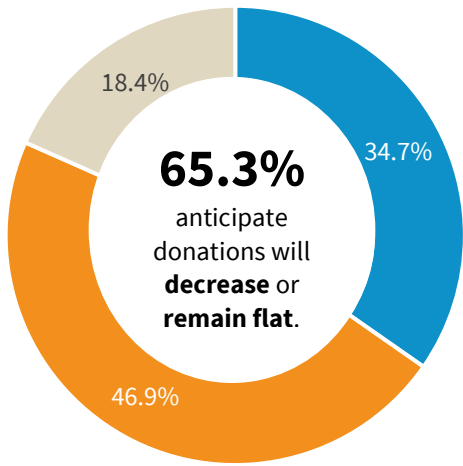
Going beyond the scope of the earlier survey, the 2023 nonprofit survey sought to quantify how much three external factors have impacted nonprofit employment challenges: 1) charitable giving; 2) natural disasters; and 3) the end of enhanced benefits provided during the declared public health emergency. The results vary widely depending on, among other things, the respondent's subsector, geographic location, and demographics of people served.

Charitable Giving

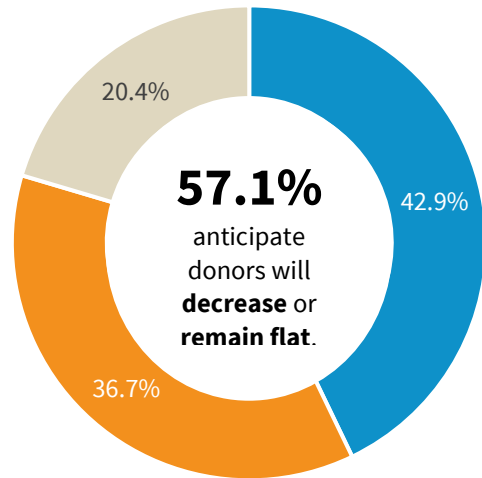
More than three out of five (65.3%) respondents anticipate the amount of donations will decline or remain flat for 2023. Well more than half (57.1%) of nonprofits expect the number of donors to decline or remain the same this year.

Figure 4: Nonprofits' Anticipated Changes in Donations and Donors for 2023

Anticipated Changes in Donations for 2023



Anticipated Changes in the Number of Donors for 2023



■ Increase in donations ■ Decrease in donations ■ No change ■ Increase in donors ■ Decrease in donors ■ No changes

The anticipation by most Nebraska nonprofits that total giving and the number of donors will be either flat or declining in 2023 is troubling. Charitable giving declined by 10.5 percent in 2022 compared to 2021, according to [Giving USA's Annual Report](#). This comes at a time when [inflation](#) has caused higher costs for services and demand for those services continues to rise. According to the [Nonprofit Finance Fund](#), between FY2019 and FY2021, demand for services significantly increased for 52% of nonprofits. As a result, nonprofits expect giving to effectively decline while the needs of residents remain high and are going up.

Impact of Natural Disasters on Nonprofits

As communities suffering from natural disasters turn to charitable nonprofits, they are discovering that the nonprofits where they seek relief are themselves struggling to recover from the significantly added workloads they endured throughout the pandemic. Natural disasters impact nonprofits in many ways, and in Nebraska they mainly led to increased demand for services and increased costs of providing services/unbudgeted costs.

Table 3: Impact of Natural Disasters on Nonprofits

Impact of Natural Disasters	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Not applicable	32	65.3%
Increased demand for services	12	24.5%
Increased costs of providing services/unbudgeted costs	9	18.4%
Staff impacted by natural disasters	4	8.2%
Other	2	4.1%

The End of the Public Health Emergency

With the expiration of many federal and state relief programs created under the COVID-19 public health emergency, some nonprofits in Nebraska expect this to impact their operations. For instance, a human services provider anticipates an increase in the number of clients. Another nonprofit shared that their staff are nervous about the reduction in coverage for testing and treatment.

Solutions and Recommendations

Recognizing that the people leading, working in, and volunteering for charitable nonprofits are, by nature, problem solvers, the 2023 survey invited participants to share the solutions they had already implemented or identified for addressing the nonprofit workforce shortages crisis. They provided practical solutions and proposed public policy solutions.

Practices Implemented by Nonprofits

Nebraska nonprofits have responded to the workforce shortages crisis with several strategies and practices, including increasing salaries, providing remote work options, expanding benefits and providing one-time bonuses. They have also been providing trainings in career advancement and in diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as supporting mental health benefits.

Table 4: Practical Solutions Implemented by Nonprofits

Implemented Practices	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Salary increases	32	65.3%
Remote work options (hybrid, full-time, etc.)	28	57.1%
Benefits increased (health insurance, transportation, etc.)	20	40.8%
One-time bonuses	20	40.8%
Career advancement opportunities (training, mentorship, etc.)	21	42.9%
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion trainings and strategies	19	38.8%
Mental health (expanded benefits, counseling, etc.)	18	36.7%
Notified employees about their eligibility for Public Service Loan Forgiveness	13	26.5%
Wellness programs (4-day workweek, additional time off, retreats, sabbaticals, etc.)	12	24.5%

Implemented Practices	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Signing bonus	11	22.4%
Not applicable	4	8.2%
Other	3	6.1%

Solutions Proposed by Nonprofits

Nonprofits on the frontlines shared solutions they think lawmakers, philanthropy, and others should consider. A Nebraska human services provider suggested based on funding patterns that “Smaller nonprofits fill really important gaps and, because of their agility, often can reach folks larger organizations cannot. Both are needed. The trend seems to be financial support heading to larger nonprofits. Smaller nonprofits need to be able to hire/retain high quality staff too.”

Profiles of Nonprofits Completing the Survey

Although workforce shortages impact nonprofits from all sectors and budgets, smaller nonprofits feel the impact more. Nonprofits with annual operating budgets below \$1 million made up 44.9% of respondents to the workforce shortages survey. Those with budgets of between \$1 million and \$3 million comprised 26.5% of respondents, and 16.3% of nonprofits had annual operating budgets that range from \$3 million to \$5 million. Another 12.2% of nonprofits had budgets greater than \$5 million.

Figure 5: Nonprofits' Annual Operating Budget

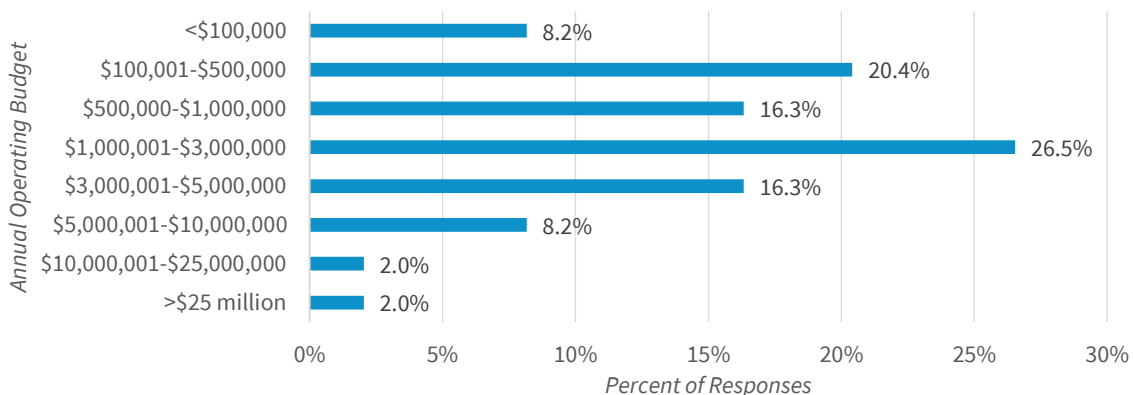


Table 5: Communities Served by Nonprofits

Communities Served	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
None of the above	19	38.8%
American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern/North African, Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx, or multi-racial/multi-ethnic	19	38.8%
People living in rural communities	9	18.4%
People with disabilities	5	10.2%
People who identify as LGBTQ+	3	6.1%

Table 6: Responses to the Nonprofit Workforce Shortages Survey by Subsector

Subsector	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Human Services	12	24.5%
Education	7	14.3%
Community/Civic Engagement	7	14.3%
Public/Societal Benefit	4	8.2%
Other	4	8.2%
Arts, Culture, and Humanities	4	8.2%
Multiple Subsectors	3	6.1%
Child Care	2	4.1%
Housing	2	4.1%
Healthcare	1	2.0%
Mental Health	1	2.0%
Religion	1	2.0%
Higher Education	1	2.0%