

# Mission-Ready Talent

## The State of NPM Education in NJ

Spotlight Brief No. 2 | November 2025

### Why Talent Pipelines Matter for New Jersey's Nonprofit Sector

Nonprofit organizations report persistent staffing shortages, rising demand, and increasing pressure to do more with fewer resources (National Council of Nonprofits, 2023). As highlighted in *Spotlight Brief No. 1*, vacancies are especially acute in fundraising, program management, development, and direct service roles. Strengthening the education-to-employment pipeline is essential to building a resilient and well-prepared nonprofit workforce in NJ (CNLD, Spotlight Brief No. 1).

A critical part of this challenge is the state's nonprofit talent pipeline. Nonprofits need fundraisers, program managers, operations staff, and mission-driven leaders with the skills to manage people, budgets, data, and compliance. Yet many organizations report difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff, particularly in fundraising, development, and program leadership positions, limiting organizational capacity and the ability to meet growing community needs.

### NJ's Nonprofit Education Landscape at a Glance

The state has a **diverse but decentralized** (see "*A Fragmented Education Ecosystem*," pg. 2) set of nonprofit management education offerings across credit-bearing degrees, certificates, and non-credit professional development. Programs vary by cost, delivery mode, and depth.

- **Demand for nonprofit managerial talent in NJ is strong likely outpacing available supply.** Fundraising managers earn an average of \$139,954, fundraisers \$73,024, and social & community service managers \$99,480—clear signals of employer demand.
- **Although NJ offers diverse training options the ecosystem is fragmented.** Nearly a dozen higher-education institutions, associations, and continuing-education providers offer nonprofit management credentials. But pathways are often unclear and unaligned.
- **Most nonprofits report difficulty filling core management roles.** As reported in Brief No. 1, 84% of nonprofits face vacancies (especially in development, direct services, and program management) highlighting the urgency of talent pipeline investments.
- **Opportunities exist to build stackable pathways, micro-credentials, and clearer connections between learning and employment.**

### CREDIT-BEARING PROGRAMS (Selected Graduate Programs)

Institution	Program	Delivery
Rutgers Newark (SPAA)	<a href="#">Nonprofit Management Certificate</a> (9 cr.); <a href="#">MPA Nonprofit Track</a>	- In person - Online
Rutgers Camden (DPPA)	<a href="#">Public &amp; Nonprofit Management Certificate</a> (12 cr.); <a href="#">MPA Nonprofit Specialization</a>	- In person - Online
Seton Hall University	<a href="#">Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Organization Management</a> (15 cr.); <a href="#">MPA Nonprofit Concentration</a>	- In person
Kean University	<a href="#">MPA—Nonprofit Management Option</a>	- Hybrid - In person
Fairleigh Dickinson University	<a href="#">Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Organizational Development</a> (18 cr.)	- In person - Online

## NON-CREDIT-BEARING PROGRAMS (Selected Programs)

Institution	Program	Delivery
Raritan Valley Community College	<a href="#">Nonprofit Manager Course</a>	- Online
Brookdale Community College	<a href="#">Nonprofit Management Continuing Education Courses</a>	- Online - In person
NJIT (MindEdge)	<a href="#">Certificate in Nonprofit Management</a>	- Online

### A Fragmented Education Ecosystem

While NJ has numerous degree and non-degree programs, they operate independently, with no unifying framework for student experiences in terms of:

- Competencies
- Stackable credentials
- Articulation between noncredit and credit experiences
- Tuition support or employer partnerships

Without clearer pathways, students struggle to navigate options, employers struggle to assess credentials, and funders struggle to invest strategically. This fragmentation may make it difficult for employer alignment in order for:

- Students to navigate pathways
- Employers to understand credential value
- Funders to invest strategically

## Labor Market Signals Indicate Strong Demand for Nonprofit Skills

According to NJ Department of Labor's Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS 2023; released June 2024), demand for nonprofit-related skills remains strong across key occupations.

**Social and Community Service Managers** hold approximately 5,190 jobs statewide, with a mean wage of \$99,480. **Fundraising Managers** earn a mean wage approaching \$140,000, while **Fundraisers** account for roughly 1,550 positions with mean and median wages around \$73,000.

These wages—above national averages—signal a tight labor market and strong competition for fundraising and program leadership talent, reinforcing the need to strengthen education and training pipelines in NJ's nonprofit sector.

### National Comparison (BLS)

Fundraisers: \$66,490 median pay; 4% projected growth (2024–2034). NJ nonprofits operate in a high-cost, highly competitive labor market, underscoring the need for well-trained nonprofit managers.

Note: Median wages from OEWS May 2023 (released 2024); growth from BLS Employment Projections, 2024–2034.

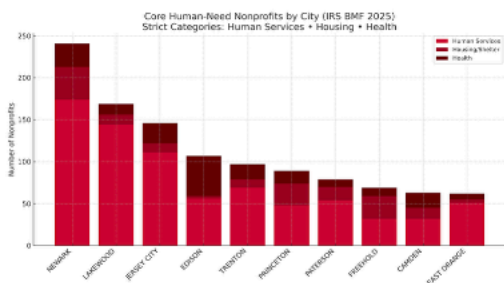


### Spotlight: Newark's Nonprofit Talent Hub

Rutgers SPAA—located in Newark, NJ—is one of the state's largest producers of nonprofit-ready graduates. SPAA offers a

NASPAA-accredited MPA with nonprofit coursework, a 9-credit Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management, and a growing portfolio of CNLD-led experiential learning, leadership development programs. Together, these offerings help build NJ's nonprofit talent pipeline through applied learning, community engagement, and workforce preparation.

IRS data show that Newark hosts the state's largest concentration of nonprofits working in human services, housing, and health. Being situated at the center of this high-need, high-activity environment allows SPAA students to engage directly with community partners, gain meaningful field experience, and enter the sector prepared to address complex social challenges.



While Newark leads the state in the number of nonprofits addressing core human needs, Lakewood also ranks high. Its elevated count, however, is driven largely by the way many of its educational and religious community organizations are coded within human-service NTEE categories. This classification inflates Lakewood's human-service totals compared with cities like Newark, where service demands are broader and reflect more diverse community needs (IRS Business Master File, 2024).

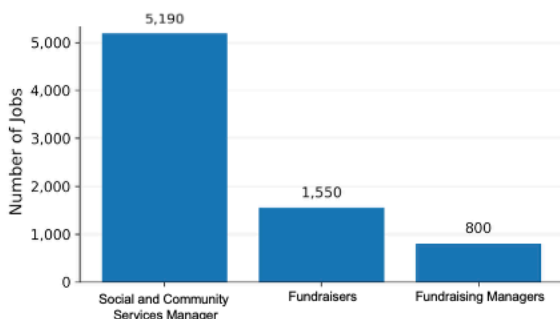
**The Way Forward** - NJ's nonprofits are at a defining moment. Rising community needs, persistent staff shortages, and a rapidly evolving skill landscape have created urgent pressure on organizations across the state. At the same time, nonprofits are expected to demonstrate stronger outcomes, manage complex funding streams, adopt new technologies, and advance equity in both services and leadership.

Strengthening the state's education-to-employment pipeline—across micro-credentials, certificates, and graduate programs—is essential to preparing the mission-ready workforce that NJ's communities depend on. But today's talent ecosystem remains decentralized, uneven in quality, and difficult for both students and employers to navigate. Pathways from training to employment are not always clear, competencies are not aligned across institutions, and opportunities for experiential learning vary widely by region.

A more coordinated, accessible, and equity-driven nonprofit talent system would help ensure that every organization—regardless of size, budget, or location—can access the skilled staff needed to deliver high-quality services. This includes clearer credentials, stronger employer partnerships, and intentional connections between education providers and the state's most active nonprofit hubs, such as Newark.

To move toward a stronger and more cohesive system, the table below summarizes several actionable strategies for strengthening NJ's nonprofit talent pipeline. These strategies draw on workforce trends, stakeholder feedback, and emerging best practices in nonprofit leadership development.

**Employment in Key Nonprofit Occupations in NJ**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, OES May 2023.

## Recommendation (Action)

## Intended Impact

Build Stackable Micro-Credentials.

Short skill-based badges (grant writing, budgeting, board governance, digital fundraising) that articulate into certificate or MPA programs.

Partner with Employers to Launch Paid Pipelines.

Newark nonprofits can serve as host sites for supervised practicums, internships, and leadership residencies.

Expand Tuition Support & Scholarships

Encourage funders and employers to subsidize coursework that directly addresses hiring gaps.

Align Education with Real-Time Labor Market Needs.

Use wage trends, vacancy data, and competency mapping to update curricula annually.

## Sources:

CNLD, **Spotlight Brief No. 1**. (September 2025). Data for Action: New Jersey's Nonprofit Sector.

Internal Revenue Service. (2024). EO-Business Master File (BMF). U.S. Department of the Treasury.

National Council of Nonprofits. (2023). Nonprofit workforce shortages: A crisis that threatens the nonprofit sector.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024). Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, May 2023. U.S. Department of Labor.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024). Employment projections: 2024–2034. U.S. Department of Labor.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024). Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, May 2023: Fundraisers (13-1131). U.S. Department of Labor.

*Note: Employment and wage figures reflect selected nonprofit-relevant occupations and do not capture all nonprofit employment.*