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Posted on November 3, 2010

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*PND is pleased to offer a series of articles for jobseekers and prospective employers provided by our partners, **Professionals for Nonprofits**, an East Coast-based search firm that provides temporary, temp-to-hire, direct hire, and executive search services to the nonprofit sector, and **Commongood Careers**, a national search firm dedicated to helping today's most effective social entrepreneurs hire the best talent.*



Job Seeking 101: The Importance of Benefits

by Naheed Elyasi

When considering a new position at a nonprofit, most job seekers focus on the mission of the organization and the salary offer but pay little or no attention to the benefits the organization provides to its employees. Benefits, however, are a crucial component of any compensation package and should be one of the things you consider when evaluating a job offer.

The amount spent on employee benefits is normally determined by an organization's budget. Small organizations tend to spend up to 15 percent of their budgets on benefits, while larger organizations may spend up to and, at times, over 30 percent.

Professionals for NonProfits recently conducted an analysis of nonprofit benefit packages in the New York City and Washington, D.C., metropolitan areas and found several differences and similarities among a wide variety of nonprofits. Almost five hundred New York City organizations and over three hundred D.C.- area nonprofits were surveyed. Our findings reveal that despite a difficult economy, the vast majority of nonprofit organizations have not made significant changes to the benefits they offer. Below are some of our findings:

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- Only 12 percent of the organizations surveyed reduced health benefits
- Almost one-quarter (24 percent) increased the employee share of their health plan costs
- Only 2 percent eliminated their dental plans, while 9 percent increased the employee share of their dental plan costs
- One out of twenty (5 percent) eliminated contributions to employee retirement plans, while 16 percent reduced their contributions
- Three-quarters (75 percent) of respondents reported no change in the professional development benefits offered to staff
- Only 5 percent eliminated professional development activities in 2009, while 20 percent cut back on such activities

The good news is that, in general, small and large organizations tend to be equally generous with vacation and holiday time. And while only a limited number of organizations offer sabbaticals, summer hours and flex time are more common than we expected.

In light of these finding, it's important for job seekers to be clear about their needs and priorities and to assess the complete compensation package, including benefits, before accepting a new position. Below are some questions you'll want to consider:

- What level of health coverage is offered?
- What other benefits are offered that add value to the offer (e.g., flex time)?
- Does the organization have a retirement plan? Is it a good one?
- Does the organization award bonuses and/or pay for good performance?
- Does the position provide opportunities for professional development?
- Are the benefits offered typical for most organizations of that size?
- Will the benefits change in the coming year?

There's a lot more on the subject in the report. To request a free copy, send an e-mail with the subject line "Requesting benefits report" to info@nonprofitstaffing.com.



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