

Navigating Growth

Staffing and Donor Development Challenges
in Oklahoma's Nonprofit Sector



Executive Summary

Oklahoma's nonprofit sector is large and diverse — with **23,353 tax-exempt organizations** (February 2024) and a sector that represents about **7% of the state's workforce**, supported by roughly **964,701 volunteers**. The sector includes many small organizations and several high-revenue institutions (hospitals, universities, large foundations) that concentrate a large share of revenue.

23,353

Organizations

964,701

Volunteers

7%

of state workforce.

Overview of Oklahoma's Nonprofit Ecosystem

Oklahoma's nonprofit landscape mixes urban hubs (OKC, Tulsa) with large rural and tribal service areas. Large health systems, universities, and community foundations account for a disproportionate share of total sector revenue and assets, while the majority of nonprofits operate with limited budgets (many under \$250K annually).

Talent constraints

Hiring & staffing challenges

- Competitive recruitment problems exist in certain regions: rural and Tribal-serving organizations compete with public sector and healthcare employers and often cannot match salaries or benefits.
- High volunteer numbers indicate opportunities to expand volunteer-driven donor cultivation but also reflect dependence on unpaid labor.

Lack dedicated IT staff

Technological & capacity gaps

Many small organizations lack dedicated CRM admins, data teams, or digital fundraising capacity, limiting segmentation, recurring giving programs, and retention strategies. This is consistent with national sector findings and state capacity surveys.

Talent constraints

Donor development trends & funding dependencies

- Smaller nonprofits often lean on events and grants; mid-level and recurring donor pipelines are underdeveloped.
- Public contracts and grants form a material portion of revenue for many organizations; changes in public funding cycles create budgeting uncertainty.

Resource limitations

Budget constraints & operational limitations

Lean staffing and tight budgets restrict investment in CRMs, training, and consultants. Shared staffing or regional hubs may be more cost-effective than hiring full-time in small markets.

Capacity gap

Regional factors

Urban/rural split: Tulsa and OKC capture a large share of giving and nonprofit capacity; rural counties and Tribal Nations face workforce, broadband, and infrastructure challenges.

Recommendations



Shared staffing models — pooled development directors, regional grant-writing cooperatives for rural nonprofits.



Leverage volunteer capacity strategically for cultivation and stewardship programs.



Adopt affordable CRMs & tools via TechSoup, Google for Nonprofits, or Microsoft Social Impact; prioritize donor segmentation and recurring giving setups.



Pilot outsourcing for grant writing and database management—short pilots with KPI-based reviews. (See typical market ranges below.)

Strategic Recommendations

Outsourcing Fundraising Services



Know When to Outsource

Ideal functions to outsource include:

- ✓ Donor communications
- ✓ Grant writing
- ✓ Major-gift planning
- ✓ CRM administration

Cost Considerations

- ✓ Hourly rates: **\$85–\$200**
- ✓ Project fees: **\$3,500–\$10,000**
- ✓ Retainer models often outperform part-time hires in ROI and consistency

Structure the Relationship for Success



Define KPIs upfront, start with a 60–90 day pilot, assign an internal point person, and review performance monthly.

For full-service fundraising, marketing, and donor growth support



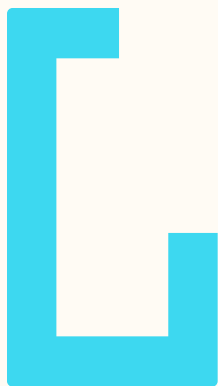
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