



American Nonprofits Concept Paper

Across many sectors, business professionals have found value in forming peer-to-peer networks that share best practices and keep members informed about the latest in their field. Examples include:

- **The Nonprofit Technology Network (NTEN)**
- **The Association for Strategic Planning**
- **The Society for Human Resource Management**
- **The Development Executives Roundtable**
- **The Alliance for Nonprofit Management**

Currently, there is no national peer-to-peer network/central resource that shares best practices and expert knowledge about nonprofit finance or strategy. Imagine that you are a CFO or accountant for a community-based nonprofit, and you are looking for guidance on best practices with filing Form 990, which accounting system might work best for your organization, or a host of other matters on which you could benefit from conferring with colleagues. In a sector where financial transparency and quality internal controls are essential, nonprofit finance professionals need a place where they can find comprehensive information on nonprofit finance and form a community to ask questions, share moderated knowledge, and get a better understanding of the challenges unique to their sector.

There are very few organizations that primarily focus on finance issues in the nonprofit sector. The Nonprofit Finance Fund is a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that offers loans and advisory services to nonprofits, and also publishes research. However, it does not leverage real-time community knowledge or provide a forum for discussions related to specific operational and strategic questions facing finance professionals in community-based nonprofits.

American Nonprofits was formed to fill this void by creating a platform for research, dialogue, and debate among nonprofit finance professionals and thought leaders on topics related to finance, accountability, capital, and strategy. American Nonprofits will:

- Create a peer-to-peer, online community for nonprofit finance staff to ask questions, learn from colleagues, and discuss current issues in the sector.
- Curate blog content from nonprofit experts and finance service providers.
- Aggregate and organize the best existing research on finance and strategy.
- Host an annual conference
- Sponsor Blue Avocado, an online magazine with 64,000 subscribers that delivers journalistic content, Op-Eds, and analysis of nonprofit topics.
- Gain a steady “pulse” on the key finance and strategy issues facing nonprofits by surveying Blue Avocado readers and generating data sets and reports from survey results.

By connecting nonprofit finance professionals with their peers, offering a curated resource center addressing nonprofit finance and strategy issues, and gathering insightful data from surveys of members, American Nonprofits will provide tremendous value to nonprofit staff on the ground, and serve as a catalyst for thought leadership and research affecting the entire sector.