

# Nonprofit Toolbox

## Building a Workplace Culture That Retains Nonprofit Talent

### Tip Sheet 3 for Small Nonprofits

Culture, not compensation, is the strongest predictor of whether employees stay. Use these quick-action strategies to build a healthier, more engaging workplace.

#### 1. Prioritize Wellbeing

**One of the most important places to begin is with staff well-being.**

- Encourage breaks, PTO, and reasonable workloads.
- Support flexible schedules or hybrid options.
- Focus on results, not hours logged.

#### 2. Strengthen Onboarding

**An often overlooked driver of retention is onboarding.**

- Set clear expectations early.
- Introduce new hires to mission, values, and culture.
- Provide structured support during the first 90 days.

#### 3. Develop Strong Managers

**Leadership plays a defining role in whether employees remain.**

- Train managers in communication, feedback, and conflict resolution.
- Offer leadership coaching or mentorship.
- Reinforce supportive, people-centered management practices.

#### **4. Encourage Innovation**

**Innovation contributes to retention in ways nonprofits sometimes underestimate.**

- Create a safe environment for trying new ideas.
- Treat mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Invite staff input and experimentation.

#### **5. Promote Authenticity and Inclusion**

**Authenticity is a powerful cultural driver.**

- Encourage employees to bring their whole selves to work.
- Support cross-cultural learning and dialogue.
- Build a culture where differences are respected and valued.

#### **6. Recognize and Appreciate Staff**

**Recognition remains one of the simplest yet most overlooked tools available to nonprofit leaders.**

- Give frequent, genuine praise.
- Share accomplishments publicly when appropriate.
- Celebrate milestones and small wins consistently.

**A mission-driven, supportive culture costs far less than turnover, yet yields far greater impact.**



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