



Development Officer—Nonprofit Sector Mental Health Programs

SALARY RANGE (2017): \$47,187–\$72,232.20

My organization makes a measurable difference in our community, but making this impact costs real money. That's where I come in. Whether it's raising money to construct a new building or getting funding to develop a new peer-to-peer support program, my job is to connect donors to things they really care about. It's hard work; you need to be patient and focus on building long-term relationships. But the satisfaction of finding and connecting enthusiastic funders with worthy community programs is priceless.

The Tip: Refine your skills through volunteering in your community. This is an accessible way to build evidence that you can actually do what you say you can do. Once you prove it, someone will hire you to do it.

PRIORITY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

Contextual Knowledge

- Understanding of context and values of audiences
- Understanding of topics and themes as they relate to an audience and their willingness to help a cause

Knowledge of Human Behaviour

- Able to relate to a wide range of individuals
- Support clients to explore motivations, behaviour, emotions, thoughts and patterns
- Guide exploration of difficult topics
- Support growth and development
- Sensitivity to how behaviours are shaped by circumstances, privilege, experience & attitudes and how this affects an individual's or organization's willingness to support a nonprofit cause

Advanced Communication Skills

- Sensitivity to how communication is shaped by circumstances, authorship and intended audience
- Formulate and defend positions
- Write for a specific audience

Inter-personal Skills

- Work with diverse populations
- Support individuals to discuss difficult topics. Often families who donate money do so because of personal difficulties they have faced with a loved one.
- Empathetic and compassionate

Intra-personal Skills

- Manage stress both personally and of others
- Calm during discussions of money and the needs of donors. This is especially helpful when finding common ground between a donor's wishes and the nonprofit agency's needs.
- Self-aware, able to manage biases

Additional Skills

- Strong organizational skills
- Intentional curiosity and thoughtful creativity
- Fundamental business acumen
- Self-motivated, independent, ethical

BUILDING BLOCK EXPERIENCES:

<p>Education & Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bachelor of Arts (Psychology–Honours)• Bachelor of Business Administration (Marketing)• After my BA and BBA, I did several courses on networking and persuasive selling• Became a certified fundraising executive (CFRE)• Read and listen to all things fundraising and mental health	<p>I grew up in a single parent home and we existed on a low income. I remember receiving help from professionals, neighbours, and community supports, and that inspired me to want to help others. I was always curious about human behaviour, development and the ability to thrive. What really led to me putting together a background in psychology and marketing was a marketing class with a community service component. My university's foundation had several of us come in to their office and do a case study and proposal on how to fundraise for our university's new multimedia degree. This experience energized me. It showed me that selling for a cause was not selling at all. It inspired me to build a career in fundraising and community building.</p>
<p>Employment Experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I worked as a server in a local restaurant before I got a job in a group home supporting people with disabilities• I worked overseas for two years with a humanitarian group based in London. This work gave me a global perspective on mental health issues and a sensitivity to immigrant issues.• I worked for three years in a not-for-profit community-based counselling practice as an aide to their development officer. This involved community presentations and school visits.• I worked for two years as an aide to the coordinator of services for our local drop-in centre that provides meals and shelter for the homeless. During this time, I presented to local businesses about the need for the shelter and why as a community it is essential that we support it.	<p>I focused on positions to give me experience in building targeted skills and assets. From this I've become a great presenter and I learned perseverance. These experiences taught me how to become a great listener and storyteller. My job is to become passionate about other people's stories and to connect stories together. For example, I recently secured a \$5 million donation to our nonprofit agency from a local company we have provided with mental health training for its employees. The company's story is now an important part of our agency's story.</p>
<p>Community Experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I volunteered on our local crisis line for mental health support and at our university diversity training centre while I was an undergrad. Talking with people and giving information about useful resources felt good and I realized that I always have wanted to work to support these initiatives.• I travel as often as I can to understand what happens in other communities at the	<p>I don't go on holidays. I travel to make a difference. Every trip I take must have a purpose. This keeps me connected to the needs of other individuals in communities around the world. Through this travel I also learn new and interesting ways to develop funding opportunities. For example, I recently saw a fundraiser driven around problem solving for mental health issues using the popular locked room puzzles to help develop awareness of mental health issues and the challenges these</p>

<p>programming and funding level for nonprofit agencies</p>	<p>individuals face.</p>
<p>Contextual Experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think it was good that I moved away from home to attend university. Living in residence taught me a great deal about working with people from a variety of different backgrounds. • Travelling and working overseas has given me a wealth of understanding of cultural issues and concerns surrounding mental health 	<p>I think growing up below the poverty line influenced my understanding of people, privilege, bias and gratitude. I don't think that you have to go through hard times to become a great development officer, but I can't deny that it's given me a lot of experience to draw from.</p>
<p>Relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I actively network with influential business leaders in both the private and public sector. I do this through Chamber of Commerce events and the Rotary Club. • My first practicum supervisor became a mentor for me. I can still call him if I get stuck. He's terrific! 	<p>For me to succeed in this job I needed to passionately build and cultivate networks. I am strategic, intentional and patient. I recognized I needed to invest in relationships for the long-haul and focus on the win-win.</p>