FUNDRAISING SKILLS PROFILE

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SUMMARY

By reading this profile we hope that you can build a better understanding of whether seeking to develop fundraising expertise seems like one of the best ways for you to use your time in order to help animals.

HOW DOES THIS WORK HELP ANIMALS
Fundraisers can increase the money available for effective animal advocacy nonprofits, enabling them to help animals more.

WHO IS THIS WORK A GOOD FIT FOR
Generalists with a mixture of interpersonal, communications, research, and analytical skills, though this varies by role type.

HOW MUCH DO WE NEED MORE EXPERTISE IN THIS AREA
A lack of funding is one of the main problems that the animal advocacy movement faces. We believe that fundraising is one of the top areas where the movement most urgently needs more expertise.

WHAT OPTIONS WOULD YOU HAVE IF YOU WERE TO LEAVE THIS PATH
Various other nonprofit roles (including campaigns, marketing, or management and leadership), roles in government institutions, or roles at for-profit companies.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR FUNDRAISING ROLES
Seek fundraising experience, professionally or voluntarily. Some for-profit experience types, such as sales, could help.
INTRODUCTION

Nonprofit organisations need funding to pay their staff’s salaries and other operational expenses. The animal advocacy movement needs to raise hundreds of millions of dollars every year to sustain itself at its current size, let alone grow.¹ A lack of funding seems to be a key bottleneck for the movement.²

In this profile, we will share some insights with you from the experiences of some of the movement’s fundraisers (via 9 interviews), plus the findings of our own research into existing animal advocacy nonprofits.

You can read more about our methodology here.

This graphic, from Animal Charity Evaluators, shows that farmed animal advocacy lacks funding, relative to shelters and other animal causes.¹
HOW DOES THIS WORK HELP ANIMALS?

IF YOU’RE INTERESTED IN HELPING ANIMALS EFFECTIVELY THROUGH YOUR CAREER, YOU SHOULD PRIORITISE WORK THAT HAS HIGH POTENTIAL FOR IMPACT.

Spending resources on fundraising can have a multiplier effect by raising substantially more money than is invested. If the movement is at all constrained by a lack of funding then this seems helpful.

However, not all fundraising efforts are equal; measured in terms of money raised, there seem to be large differences in the effectiveness of fundraising efforts. A few years ago, 80,000 Hours found that “for each £1 spent on fundraising, studies have shown that charities typically raise £4-10.” By comparison, more recently, the Effective Altruism Foundation estimated that for every $1 spent on fundraising projects, they raised another $32. So good fundraising could make a substantial difference to what animal advocacy nonprofits can achieve.
It has been suggested that fundraising is what economists would call a “zero-sum game”; a gain in funding for one nonprofit requires an equal loss in funding for other nonprofits.\textsuperscript{6} Indeed, the total amount of charitable giving in the US seems to have hovered around 2% GDP for years,\textsuperscript{7} suggesting that most additional fundraising efforts don’t really “raise” money — they just move it from one nonprofit to another. In fact, we should expect that “most fundraisers at the margin are shifting money to charities that are less effective than the average charity.”\textsuperscript{8}

However, charitable giving isn’t entirely fixed. Widespread use of effective fundraising techniques (or any number of long-term, indirect processes\textsuperscript{9}) could plausibly change the total amount of funding raised for nonprofits. The total donated to the combined category of environmental and animal causes by US donors increased slightly from 2016 to 2017 and from 2017 to 2018, suggesting that fundraising in animal advocacy may not be an entirely a zero-sum game.\textsuperscript{10}

Redirecting funding to other charities can also still be desirable, insofar as some charities are plausibly orders of magnitude more impactful than others. This principle might hold in comparing the cost-effectiveness of different animal advocacy charities,\textsuperscript{11} although there are good reasons to be sceptical that charitable organisations in similar areas will differ in cost-effectiveness by more than one or two orders of magnitude. Overall, fundraising for animal advocacy charities that seem to be more cost-effective than average is probably a good thing.\textsuperscript{12}
WILL YOU HAVE GOOD PERSONAL FIT WITH FUNDRAISING ROLES?

THE INFORMATION IN THIS SECTION IS INTENDED TO HELP YOU ASSESS WHETHER YOU WILL HAVE GOOD PERSONAL FIT WITH FUNDRAISING ROLES. YOUR "PERSONAL FIT" WITH A ROLE OR CAREER PATH IS HOW WELL-SUITED YOU ARE TO IT AND YOUR CHANCES OF REALLY EXCELLING AT IT. WE THINK THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN IMPACT-FOCUSED CAREER STRATEGY.

If you already have substantial M&L expertise and are reading this profile to decide whether you should seek to apply your expertise to animal advocacy, you might like to skip this section.
WHAT DO FUNDRAISERS DO?

You can read about our fundraising interviewees’ answers to the question “What does a typical day involve?” in the interview findings spreadsheet. There were some notable themes which emerged in their answers:

- Communicating with donors. Of course, this often involves directly asking donors or institutions for their financial support.
- Researching potential donors and grant-makers.
- One-to-one communication with individuals and institutions that might make gifts and thanking them for gifts they have made. Fundraising involves both cultivating relationships with prospective donors and stewarding relationships with existing donors.
- Organising fundraising events.
- Coordinating with other employees in the organisation to ensure that information relayed to donors is well-informed and to support communication with or proposals for donors.
- Logistical work coordinating fundraising across the department or specific fundraising campaigns.
- Tasks relating to any management and leadership responsibilities that they have, such as calls with their team members or training and recruitment.

There are a number of different types of fundraising roles. Our anonymous Development Manager interviewee divided fundraising roles into “supporter care,” “digital marketing,” “offline roles” (including fundraising at events and physical mailings), and “senior relationship management.”

Some teams have highly specialised staff. Brittany Chambers of the Good Food Institute explained that their fundraising team had seven staff: two philanthropy officers with major individual donors, one director of development, one associate director, one person focused on smaller gifts, Brittany herself (a corporate philanthropy officer), and one person whose role was similar to Brittany’s but...
focused on foundations. This contrasts with the picture that Jakub Stencel painted of fundraising in the countries where Anima International has a small presence; fundraisers at smaller organisations tend to be more like generalists, working on lots of different types of fundraising.23

Our impression from our interviews24 is that there is quite a lot in common between roles focusing on raising money from major donors, corporations, and foundations. Each engages with a relatively small number of individuals or institutions.25 They have to understand the goals and priorities of those individuals or institutions, then cultivate a relationship with them through tailored communications. There are some differences between these roles. For example, grant writers likely do more “behind the scenes” work to compile relevant information and prepare for their communications with donors.26

However, these three role types are all quite different from roles focusing on digital fundraising or supporter care, where fundraisers communicate with a large number of individuals giving smaller amounts, including via channels such as mailing lists and blog posts. This likely involves more data analysis and less face-to-face contact.27 These roles all seem likely to be quite different from fundraising roles more heavily focused on events organising and face-to-face contact at those events.28

Of course, a fundraising role might look quite different depending on the specific organisation, too. For example, Heather Herrell noted that her role involved fundraising not only for Animal Charity Evaluators but also for ACE’s recommended charities. She also suggested that fundraising for a very targeted, specialised nonprofit might look quite different from fundraising for an organisation that simultaneously ran several different programmes and interventions.29
WHAT MAKES GREAT FUNDRAISERS?

You can read about our interviewees’ answers to the question “What makes great fundraisers?” in the interview findings spreadsheet. Characteristics and skillsets that were mentioned by multiple interviewees included:

- “People skills” and “emotional intelligence.”
- Passion for the cause.
- Being able to “sell” the organisation, convince people, and tell compelling stories to donors.
- Familiarity with data, data analysis expertise, and an ability to make decisions based on evidence and testing rather than intuition alone.
- Writing skills.
- Ability to research your donors to understand their priorities and prepare for your interactions with them.
- Being comfortable talking to a variety of different audiences and demographics and having the ability to tailor your fundraising pitch to the priorities of different donors.
- Marketing expertise.

These answers seemed to agree with much of the advice offered by many careers-guidance websites.

Fundraising teams use a number of software tools in their work. These include donor research tools like “Wealth Engine” or “Donor Search,” analytics tools like “Donor Trends” which help you do predictive modelling about who is ready to give or update their gifts, and various donor database tools. Heather Herrell of Animal Charity Evaluators commented that in fundraising, “personal skills” are more important than technical skills with these tools. However, our anonymous Development Manager — who, like Heather, is the only full-time fundraiser on their team — responded first of all with “digital skills” (and secondly with “people skills”) to the question of “What makes great fundraisers?”
We asked our interviewees directly about the differences between different types of fundraising roles. Some noted that these various roles were similar in many ways, albeit with different focuses and specialisms. However, our interviewees did note some differences in the required skills, especially between those focused on one-to-one fundraising and those focused on fundraising through mass marketing:

- Those working with major donors can be slightly less focused on data analysis or marketing-style skills than those working with large fundraising campaigns or optimising communications with smaller donors.

- For those working with major donors or face-to-face fundraising at events, one-to-one communications skills seem more important. Those fundraising from major donors also need to be able to create tailored strategies for maximising gifts from particular individuals.

- For grant-writing, the focus can be more on rigorously demonstrating evidence of impact, especially for granting bodies in the effective altruism community. By contrast, in face-to-face fundraising, sharing “too much information” might be counterproductive.

Jakub Stencel of Anima International warned that the apparent lessons from for-profit marketing and sales can sometimes be misleading. Nevertheless, there is some research focused specifically on fundraising effectiveness that could support effective fundraising. For example, having reviewed relevant research, Aaron Gertler encourages the use of “anchoring” people to suggested donation amounts, asking donors how they are doing before asking them for money, adding pictures to donation materials, emphasising a single identifiable victim instead of (or at least before) emphasising statistics on the problem, and various other strategies. As another example of relevant research, a survey by Google found that “online video tops the charts as the most influential online advertisement in driving a donation.” Additionally, NextAfter publishes the results of “1500+ experiments” that “can give you ideas on new tests to run as you look for new ways to optimize your online fundraising.”

Faunalytics have also written a series of research posts seeking specifically to support fundraising for farmed animal advocacy:

- “Giving To Animals: New Data On Who And How”
- “The People Who Support Animal Causes: Descriptive Results”
- “Increasing Donations Through Appeal Types, Exposure, And Donor Characteristics”
- “Donor Segmentation: The People Who Donate To Non-Companion Animals”
“Which Groups Are Least Likely To Support Animal Causes (And Which Causes Do They Support Instead)?”

ARE THERE ANY OTHER REASONS YOU MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE A GOOD FIT?

Several interviewees mentioned the importance of being — or becoming — comfortable in asking people for money. This may sound like an obvious requirement, but, as Caroline Mills of The Humane League put it, “there is something about asking someone for $100,000 that will always be scary.” Doing it repeatedly and building comfort “is really invaluable.” Kalista Barter (also of THL) agreed that fundraising is “scary for some people,” but suggested that this might be “because people don’t understand that there’s so many avenues you can take in fundraising” — this is less of a barrier if you’re not focusing on one-to-one fundraising.

Heather Herrell of Animal Charity Evaluators commented that “most fundraisers tend to be more extroverted and enjoy interacting with other people.” Similarly, Chris Popa of ProVeg commented that “you’ve got to feel happy being around people and communicating all the time.”

Two interviewees mentioned that fundraising can be more satisfying than other role types in the sense that there are clear and direct feedback loops; you work with donors and very visibly get to see how successful you are via the money that is raised. This sense of visible impact can be missing from other types of work, such as in various operations roles or in political advocacy.

Our anonymous Development Manager interviewee emphasised that fundraising involved a variety of skillsets and tasks, including story-telling, people skills, and data analysis, which can be rewarding if you enjoy using all of these varied skillsets.
Generally, fundraising seems to be better paid than other nonprofit roles. This may also be the case specifically in the animal advocacy nonprofit space, though perhaps not to the same degree as in other nonprofit sectors.

**HOW CAN YOU ASSESS YOUR PERSONAL FIT?**

- Look honestly at your previous success in related work that uses the skills described above. Introspection on your preferences and personality could also be helpful.
- If you don’t currently work in fundraising, there might be opportunities to explore fundraising yourself. Can you get involved with existing fundraising initiatives at your university or company? Can you do some fundraising as an individual? Can you write a pitch to a donor for a nonprofit?
- You might be able to fundraise directly for an organisation in a more formal voluntary capacity.
- Heather Herrell of Animal Charity Evaluators noted that lots of organisations look for help with planning and running special events or with campaigns that interact directly with the public.
- You can try to understand the roles and work of fundraisers better by reading or listening to materials about them.
- Talk to fundraisers; ask them about your uncertainties and ask them to candidly assess your chances at excelling in similar work. We recommend using your personal connections and the effective animal advocacy community directory as starting points. See also 80,000 Hours’ recommended “email scripts for cold-emailing.”
- If you think that you are plausibly a good candidate, you should apply for fundraising roles at effective animal advocacy nonprofits. This can provide useful insights, such as during test tasks and interviews, and sometimes you can get direct feedback from hiring managers. Job hunting and fundraising itself have several characteristics in common; to be successful you need to “sell” something (the nonprofit or your own skills) and persuade someone to place their faith and resources in you. Of course, there are also many differences, but, compared to other job types in animal advocacy nonprofits, your ability to network and secure yourself a paid role in fundraising may be an unusually accurate representation of how good your personal fit is with the role itself.
WHAT IS FUNDRAISING IN ANIMAL ADVOCACY LIKE IN PRACTICE?

A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE LANDSCAPE OF THE ANIMAL ADVOCACY MOVEMENT MIGHT HELP YOU UNDERSTAND SOME PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF WHETHER YOU ARE WELL-SUITED TO WORK IN THIS AREA.

It's also important for understanding how your strengths compare to other members of the animal advocacy movement who might plausibly do similar roles. This determines your comparative advantage — the job or path that is highest-impact for you, taking into account the possibility of coordination with others in the animal advocacy movement. This is something we can talk through with you if you apply for a one-to-one careers advice call with us.
HOW MUCH DOES THE MOVEMENT NEED MORE EXPERTISE IN THIS AREA?

Although fundraising can be a rewarding career, additional funds are only helpful if there are cost-effective uses for them. There is some reason to believe that the animal advocacy movement is, for the most part, sufficiently funded at the moment:

- At the time of searching (March 2020), Open Philanthropy had granted out $110 million since 2016 to organisations categorised as focusing on “farm animal welfare,” including $38.5 million in 2019. The 4 “Top Charities” in Animal Charity Evaluators’ ratings had received an average of $7.5 million each (covering on average about 50% of each organisation’s expenditure since 2016⁶⁴), compared to the wider average of $2.2 million per grantee.⁶⁵ This seems to provide evidence that the most cost-effective organisations — at least by Open Philanthropy and Animal Charity Evaluators’ estimations — will receive substantial funding.⁶⁶

- If you think that the gap between the most cost-effective charities (e.g. ACE’s Top Charities) and other funded charities is large, you might take this as evidence that there are few promising funding opportunities.

- A 2019 survey of effective altruism organisations by the Centre for Effective Altruism (CEA) found that, on average, organisations rated themselves as more “talent-constrained” (average 3.8 out 5) than “funding-constrained” (average 2.4 out of 5). There are substantial limitations to the applicability of these findings to the animal advocacy movement, however.⁶⁷

There are also reasons to expect that the effectiveness of the movement is substantially constrained by a lack of funding:

- Despite the large amounts of funding received through Open Philanthropy’s grants, Animal Charity Evaluators’ “Top Charities” can only be assigned this status if ACE concludes that they have considerable “room for more funding.” ACE has always had 3 or 4 Top Charities and numerous additional “Standout Charities” at any one time.

- Animal Charity Evaluators and Open Philanthropy seem to frequently agree about which charities can make best use of additional funding. If you disagree with their views about animal advocacy strategy,⁶⁸ then you might conclude that the movement is substantially more constrained by a lack of funding, because important tactics and organisations are still not receiving much of
this funding. Of course, these two funding bodies only provide a small portion of the total funding in the animal advocacy movement.\(^6\)

In our short initial survey and interviews with 12 CEO's and hiring professionals from 9 of the “top” or “standout” charities currently or formerly recommended by Animal Charity Evaluators, 9 respondents selected “funding” as the bottleneck that they “identify most” with in their organisation, though most respondents selected more than one option.\(^7\) We asked participants another question that provided evidence that funding was a major bottleneck for organisations, but the answers seemed highly counterintuitive to us,\(^8\) so we don’t think that we should place much weight on this finding.

Our impression from a limited number of conversations (and these comments by three organisations working on wild animal welfare research) is that research organisations struggle to get enough funding. Of course, these organisations may not be highly representative of the animal advocacy space more broadly.

It’s worth noting that funding can be a bottleneck without fundraising expertise also being a bottleneck.\(^9\) If we conclude that funding is a bottleneck, then this increases the value of career options that bring additional funding into the movement. Apart from fundraising, “earning to give” could be a promising option; if you optimise your career for earning money, you may be able to directly donate enough money to support one or more full-time staff members for animal advocacy organisations. Work at foundations could also be promising; you may be able to encourage the foundation to give more towards animal advocacy than it otherwise would or redirect grants to more cost-effective organisations and interventions.

However, there is some evidence that fundraising expertise is indeed a bottleneck:

- 5 respondents to the survey of CEO’s and hiring professionals mentioned above selected “fundraising experience” as one of up to 6 skills (out of 25 options) that their organisation most needed; this was the second most frequently selected option, after “management.”
- 2 out of 10 respondents to the same survey mentioned fundraising roles as being “the hardest to fill.” We’ve heard anecdotal evidence of this too.
- If certain types of expertise are undersupplied in the community, relative to its needs, we would expect that such skillsets would be overrepresented in
animal advocacy job adverts, since roles using these skillsets would be harder to fill. In our “spot-check” of current roles and advertised roles at 27 animal advocacy nonprofits, fundraising was the skillset that was most notably overrepresented in animal advocacy job adverts (appearing to be important in 17% of identified job ads) relative to the number of current roles in the movement (appearing to be important in 10% of current roles). As discussed in our blog post on the spot-check, however, this research provides only weak evidence on the question of what the movement’s greatest bottlenecks are.

There is evidence from a 2013 report that senior fundraisers are difficult to hire in US nonprofits generally.\(^{73}\) A report from the previous year also suggested that turnover rates are high, with fundraisers staying at their job for only 16 months, on average.\(^{74}\) This makes it seem more likely that animal advocacy nonprofits face the same difficulty.

The same report found evidence that smaller nonprofits may struggle to attract the most experienced fundraisers.\(^{75}\) Given that many animal advocacy organisations have small budgets, this provides another reason to expect that animal advocacy organisations will struggle to hire fundraisers, though this is only very weak evidence that this is a bottleneck for the movement.

Overall, our impression is that funding is one of the main bottlenecks in the movement, if not the main bottleneck, and that fundraising expertise is among the top 5 talent bottlenecks in the movement. However, we are only moderately confident in these claims, and we hope to conduct more systematic research of the needs of animal advocacy organisations in the near future.

WHICH SORTS OF FUNDRAISING ROLES ARE MOST COMMONLY AVAILABLE?

In the section above on “What do fundraisers do?” we noted that there are many different types of fundraising roles. So how many jobs are there in different areas? Many fundraising titles are generic, such as “Development Manager” or “Fundraiser.” This makes it difficult to ascertain what fundraising roles entail. However, our impression is that there are few very highly specialised fundraising roles. For example, from the 72 fundraising roles identified in our spot-check of current roles at animal advocacy nonprofits, only two individuals had job titles that clearly demarcated them as focusing on corporate fundraising or work with foundations. Similarly, only 2 titles seemed to clearly imply a primary focus on fundraising through events, although the title of our interviewee who focused on this sort of work is just “fundraiser,” so this focus may not be obvious from job titles.\(^{76}\)
Smaller donors provide vital support for animal advocacy organisations. For example, 65% of Anima International’s donations came from small donors in 2019. Nevertheless, Kalista Barter of THL explained that many of the larger animal advocacy nonprofits in the US outsource their direct mail and online fundraising programmes. THL has one employee managing the relationship with the external company, which then provides a team of 10 or so individuals who work with THL and other clients. Hence, the number of employees of animal advocacy nonprofits working predominantly on direct mail and online fundraising in animal advocacy organisations may be lower than you would otherwise expect. Brittany Chambers noted that GFI does not do this; they have an annual fund manager in charge of online giving and direct mail programs.

WHICH COUNTRIES ARE FUNDRAISING ROLES BASED IN?

From our spot-check of 27 animal advocacy nonprofits, we identified 72 roles that seemed to involve fundraising. Of those, 49% were based in the US, suggesting that fundraising roles are slightly concentrated in the US, relative to other role types, since only 38% of the 740 full-time and paid roles identified in the full spot-check were based in the US. This makes sense, since the US is a wealthy country, and funds raised there can support advocacy elsewhere. 8% of identified fundraising roles were based in other English-speaking countries, and the other 43% were based in countries where English is not the first language. Fundraising roles were identified in 13 countries in total. Note, however, that our inclusion criteria for the search were fairly arbitrary, and the identified roles are not necessarily fixed in those particular countries.

When searching for advertised roles, we found 15 paid roles with some form of fundraising responsibilities; of these, 10 were remote and 2 more had the option of remote work. 4 seemed to be highly flexible in terms of the country of residence. This frequency of remote work seemed to be higher for fundraising roles than for other role types, although, given the small sample size from a very limited time-period, we’re not sure how typical this is.
WHAT OPTIONS WOULD YOU HAVE IF YOU WERE TO LEAVE THIS PATH?

SINCE DEVELOPING FUNDRAISING EXPERTISE REQUIRES BUILDING UP GENERALIST SKILLS, IF YOU WERE TO FOCUS ON THIS BUT THEN DECIDE THAT YOU ARE NO LONGER INTERESTED IN PURSUING THE PATH, THE CAREER CAPITAL (SKILLS, CONNECTIONS, AND CREDENTIALS) THAT YOU GAIN WOULD LIKELY BE APPLICABLE TO A NUMBER OF AREAS WITHIN ANIMAL ADVOCACY.

We asked a few of our interviewees if they thought that fundraising could be useful preparation for other sorts of roles at animal advocacy nonprofits.

They noted several key points:

- Fundraising provides a lot of generally useful skills.\(^{82}\)
- The skills built up for fundraising with large numbers of donors could be quite transferable to large-scale campaigns\(^ {83}\) or communications and marketing roles.\(^ {84}\)
The one-to-one people skills from face-to-face and major donor work seem likely to be transferable to corporate engagement roles.\(^{85}\)

Donor management skills could be highly transferable to human resources roles.\(^{86}\)

Given that everyone at a nonprofit tends to be involved in some ways with fundraising, fundraising experience might be more generically useful for staff than experience in some other role types might be.\(^{87}\)

A 2013 report found that, among surveyed organisations categorised as fundraising “high performers,” 38% of executive directors had “previous development experience”; the figure was 24% in the rest of the sample.\(^{88}\) By rough comparison, 10% of paid, full-time roles that we identified in our spot-check of 27 animal advocacy nonprofits were fundraising roles. This provides evidence that fundraisers may be well-placed to enter high-level management and leadership roles in nonprofits.\(^{89}\)

There are certainly some commonalities between the requirements of fundraising and management and leadership roles (even charity entrepreneurship), especially the need for “people skills” and a “generalist” skillset. Others share our impression that fundraisers are well-placed to transition into leadership roles.\(^{90}\)

Our guess is that efforts that go towards building up the communications, analytical, and “people” skills that seem to be important for fundraising could also be applicable to government, policy, and lobbying roles. However, as noted in our skills profile on that area, working in animal advocacy nonprofits doesn’t seem like a great idea for those seeking to enter roles in policy and politics.

Jakub Stencel of Anima International’s intuition was that fundraising roles might provide some of the best career capital for applying to for-profit roles, if you decided to leave the nonprofit space. Although our interviewees were mostly focusing on roles at animal advocacy nonprofits, several of the backup options that they mentioned after coming out of fundraising roles — communications, marketing, and corporate engagement — have equivalents in the for-profit sector. Additionally, the skills could be transferable to sales roles.\(^{91}\)

**INTERESTED IN FUNDRAISING ROLES TO HELP ANIMALS?**

If you need to do some career planning, 80,000 Hours’ “TIPS ON MAKING CAREER PLANS” will likely be helpful.

If you’re considering whether you’d like to focus on developing fundraising expertise, or bringing your existing fundraising expertise to support the animal advocacy movement, we might be able to help you talk through your options. You can apply for a one-to-one careers advice call with us here.
HOW TO PREPARE FOR FUNDRAISING ROLES

So far, this profile has focused on information to help you decide whether seeking to develop fundraising expertise to put to use in animal advocacy nonprofits would be a high-impact use of your time. The information below is more focused on helping you decide what you could do next if you decide that you do want to focus on this.

WHAT ARE THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS?

Our “spot-check” of advertised job opportunities at 27 animal advocacy nonprofits found that, among the 15 advertised fundraising positions, the average number of years of relevant experience (not necessarily fundraising experience) that was expected was 2.5. Six of the 15 roles explicitly stated the need for formal nonprofit experience and a further four implied that it was preferred. Several interviewees emphasised that direct fundraising experience is a big boost to applicants and that there is no real substitute for this.92
We asked about the previous work history of 8 of our interviewees. Of these, 6 had worked in full-time fundraising roles prior to beginning their work in the animal advocacy or animal-free food organisation that they currently work for. 3 out of 8 had previously worked in other roles at animal advocacy or animal-free food organisations (with 2 out of 3 of these having been focused on fundraising). Of course, our interviewees’ backgrounds don’t constitute “entry requirements,” they just give an indication of the backgrounds of people who have successfully secured fundraising roles at animal advocacy and animal-free food nonprofits.

Our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee suggested that “you don’t necessarily need to have years of experience, but you would definitely want to find ways” to get concrete fundraising experience from outside full-time roles “before you apply.”

Among the 15 advertised fundraising positions identified in our spot-check, 4 of 15 job adverts specifically stated that a bachelor’s degree was needed and another advert implied that it was preferred. Only one advert specified that postgraduate or professional qualifications were needed and one more advert implied that it was preferred. Kalista Barter of THL commented that she did not think that a degree was necessary and that you could progress further in fundraising careers by applying directly to roles earlier. Chris Popa of ProVeg agreed that a degree could be “helpful but not necessary.”

Note that sometimes formal entry requirements are not as “required” as the job advert implies. Of course, beyond the formal entry requirements, you’ll also want to ensure that you have good personal fit (see the relevant section above).

WHAT SORTS OF EXPERIENCE ARE MOST USEFUL FOR DEVELOPING FUNDRAISING EXPERTISE?

You can read about our interviewees’ answers to the question “What sorts of experience are most useful for developing fundraising expertise?” and several related questions in the interview findings spreadsheet. Interviewees recommended work

Unlike some of our other interviewees, Marcela Borges of the Brazilian Vegetarian Society had had little direct fundraising experience before securing her current role.
that builds up experience and expertise in relevant skillsets and activity types, such as in communications and persuasion, data analysis, and mediating between various stakeholders (internal and external to organisations).

Several interviewees emphasised that direct fundraising experience is helpful. However, there may be some ways to get substantial fundraising experience without having a full-time fundraising role. For example, our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee used the website idealist.org to do pro bono and low-paid grant writing to build up experience. They also attended conferences to make connections and find skilled volunteering opportunities. They emphasised that you may need to take the initiative to identify fundraising opportunities in your existing role if it isn’t directly focused on fundraising.

Of course, the relevance of particular types of fundraising experience might vary by the sort of fundraising roles you are interested in. For example, Chris Popa of ProVeg, who works in face-to-face fundraising himself, commented that “actually doing face-to-face fundraising on the street would be perfect preparation.” However, Heather Herrell noted that while some organisations use face-to-face events for fundraising, other groups (including Animal Charity Evaluators) do not; experience of fundraising at events would not be as highly relevant to these organisations.

More concretely, four interviewees suggested that client relations or sales experience from the for-profit space would be useful preparation. Two interviewees suggested marketing experience, two suggested events planning or events management experience, and two suggested project managing experience. Other concrete suggestions for useful forms of experience were offered by individual interviewees, with various rationales, including acting, campaigns roles in animal advocacy nonprofits, entrepreneurship, journalism, mentorship, teaching, and wider volunteering in animal advocacy nonprofits.

Our interviewees tended to have more experience in fundraising than experience of full-time work in animal advocacy. We asked 7 of our interviewees a question designed to elicit their sense of the relative importance of fundraising experience and experience in the animal advocacy or animal-free food movements. 6 out of 7 answered that fundraising experience seemed more important. Several interviewees noted caveats to these answers.

The only person who leaned towards experience in effective animal advocacy as being more important than fundraising experience (Jakub Stencel of Anima International) chose an answer somewhat more reluctantly than some of the other
interviewees. He was also the only person who personally had more experience in the animal advocacy movement than fundraising experience. These answers provide weak evidence that, all else being equal, prior experience in fundraising is more useful than prior experience in animal advocacy.\textsuperscript{112}

The experience of Sociedade Vegetariana Brasileira, as described by Marcela Borges, also provides some evidence that fundraising experience is more useful: before Marcela accepted her position as a fundraiser, SVB had had three people who accepted the role but didn’t stay long, despite having been “really really into the cause” and “willing to give their time.”

\section*{WHAT Sort OF Academic TRAINING IS RELEVANT?}

One website claims that “a degree may be preferred by the majority of employers; however, this can be in any subject.” Other websites convey the impression that a wide variety of degrees are acceptable,\textsuperscript{113} an impression that was shared by several of our interviewees.\textsuperscript{114} Some websites suggest that particular degrees might be preferred, though the recommendations that they offer only partly overlap; “public relations” and “business” courses were recommended by several.\textsuperscript{115} Looking through the degrees of individuals in fundraising roles in animal advocacy nonprofits, there were no obvious trends in terms of the particular degrees being over-represented. Unsurprisingly, more fundraisers seemed to have degrees in humanities or social sciences than in natural sciences.\textsuperscript{116}

At least two universities offer undergraduate degrees directly related to fundraising, but this seems to be rare. Some courses are available that focus on nonprofits generally, such as in “nonprofit management.” Some business schools and programmes might offer highly relevant courses, such as in sales. But the content of courses themselves aren’t the only important way in which they contribute to your career capital. Our guess is that it’s probably better to focus on degrees that might support you to develop skills that you need, such as communications skills, people skills, and research, than to prioritise a seemingly more directly relevant degree.
DELIBERATE PRACTICE AND TRAINING

When we asked our interviewees what the best resources for developing fundraising skills were, several emphasised that mentorship from more experienced fundraisers can be very helpful. Caroline Mills of The Humane League believed that courses, webinars, and certifications could be useful, though Caroline herself and two other interviewees suggested that these qualifications would likely be less useful than hands-on experience or mentorship.

Searches on Amazon for “nonprofit fundraising” or just “fundraising” reveal a number guides on the topic. You can use a number of other platforms to identify relevant resources. See here for a short list of other fundraising resources, including those recommended by our interviewees.

Kalista Barter of THL suggested that slow and deliberate practice of writing to individual donors was a useful exercise for improving fundraising skills. Jakub Stencel of Anima International suggested that there is likely some “low-hanging fruit” of basic familiarity with social psychology, so looking into this topic area could be helpful. Depending on what fundraising tasks you currently undertake, other ways to improve your fundraising technique might include A/B testing, formal experiments, or informally trying out variations to your practice and reflecting on the results.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- Our list of fundraising resources for self-development.
- One-to-one careers advice calls with us.
- The interview findings spreadsheet for this skills profile.
- The effective animal advocacy community directory.

For securing relevant roles outside of animal advocacy nonprofits, the following resources may be useful:

- 80,000 Hours’ advice on “how to get a job.”
- 80,000 Hours’ advice on entering specific career paths.

Individuals already working in fundraising may be interested in our short document on “Which audiences are most receptive to fundraising for farmed animal advocacy?”
NOTES

1 Lewis Bollard of Open Philanthropy recently estimated that $150-180 million was spent on farmed animal advocacy internationally, about $35 million of which is provided by Open Philanthropy. Bollard has used a total of $165 million elsewhere. On average, OpenPhil gave $27,223,980 each year in 2016-9, but the total given in 2019 ($38,525,375) was substantially greater than in 2016 ($14,436,270).

2 See the section on “How badly does the movement need more expertise in this area?”

3 See, for example, here and here.

4 We think it is, as discussed in the section below on “How badly does the movement need more expertise in this area?”

5 If we also consider differences in impact between charities and the potential for some fundraising efforts to be counterproductive, then the real differences could be orders of magnitude greater than these figures imply. So, if possible, it’s important to focus fundraising efforts on supporting the most impactful charities.

For other multipliers, see here.

6 This loss could be spread across vast numbers of other nonprofits, so even a large gain for a particular nonprofit would probably be imperceptible to other nonprofits.

7 This is explicitly noted in this article from 2013, making a comparison to the results from 2011, using figures from “Giving USA.” More recently, Giving USA found that $410.02 billion was given to US charities in 2017 and $427.71 billion was given in 2018 — US GDP in 2017 (note that this is one year out from the most recent giving figure) was apparently $19.3906 trillion; the donation figure works out as 2.1% of GDP.

8 80,000 Hours notes that “if you graph how cost-effective charities are... the median is significantly less than the mean. In other words, the effectiveness of the majority of charities is less than the effectiveness of the average charity. That sounds a bit odd, but it’s just because the average effectiveness is pulled up a long way by the small number of really good charities at the top. (Similarly, the average wage at a company is normally higher than what the majority of the staff are paid). This means that most fundraisers at the margin are shifting money to charities that are less effective than the average charity. So, they are reducing the overall effectiveness of the charity sector. They are actually reducing how much good gets done!” On the differences in cost-effectiveness of animal charities, see footnote 11.

9 These could include changes to overall GDP, income inequality, cultural views on giving, the breadth of humanity’s moral circle, and so on. We haven’t looked into empirical evidence or theories on long-term factors affecting total giving, but many factors seem plausibly influential.

10 The increase from 2016 to 2017 of 7.0% (from $11.05bn to $11.83bn) and the increase from 2017 to 2018 of 7.4% (from $11.83bn to $12.70bn) are above the inflation rates in those years. The total was still close to 3% of US donations in each of these years, however, so most fundraising efforts likely still just poach funding from other animal advocacy organisations.

Of course, of this money, only a tiny proportion goes towards farmed animal advocacy. We have not seen the full Giving USA reports. However, Faunalytics found from a large sample of “animal-cause donors” that “82% of respondents had given money to companion animal charities. In addition, two-thirds of those donors had not given money to any other type of animal charity... 12% [had given] to charities for farmed animals (including sanctuaries).” Using data available in 2016, Animal Charity Evaluators found that “while farmed animals account for over 99% of all animals used and killed by humans in the U.S., only 1% of donations to animal charities go to those that specifically focus on helping farmed animals.”
As a simple demonstration of this claim, consider the number of lab animals and the number of farmed animals alive at any one point. Then imagine that, for the same cost, one group of charities might reduce the number of farmed animals by 0.1% and another might reduce the number of lab animals by 0.1%. Given the huge differences in the relative number of animals, the former group would likely reduce orders of magnitude more suffering. The mid-points and best guess estimates of expected value for different intervention types given by Animal Charity Evaluators (at least, in their archived intervention reports) and Charity Entrepreneurship also suggest that several orders of magnitude of differences in cost-effectiveness are possible between different farmed animal interventions.

Large differences might also occur between different cause areas associated with effective altruism; when 80,000 Hours surveyed the staff at effective altruism organisations, they found that “the median view was that the Long-Term Future fund was 1.6x as cost-effective as the EA Community fund, which in turn was 10 times more cost-effective than the Animal Welfare fund, and twenty times as cost-effective as the Global Health and Development fund. Individual views on this question varied very widely, though 18/28 respondents thought the Long-Term Future fund was the most effective.” See also this comparison between The Humane League and the Against Malaria Foundation.

Cooperation between altruistic communities and different value systems seems desirable. So we should avoid excessively aggressive forms of fundraising, e.g. via criticising the integrity and motivations of other animal advocacy groups.

See the answers by Jakub and our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee.

See the answers by Jakub, Caroline, Brittany, and Heather.

See the answers by Kalista and our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee.

See the answers by Heather and our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee.

See the answers by Caroline and Chris.

See the answers by Marcela, Caroline, Kalista, and our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee. Jakub also discussed this in response to an unplanned follow-up question, as did Heather (listed under the column for “Can you summarise your role for me?”).

One reviewer added that other tasks might include “writing copy, content, grant (proposals, direct response, collateral, etc.), engaging boards in fund development, analysis and evaluation, strategy / planning, back of house functions like data entry, database management, gifts processing, and overseeing vendors, consultants, etc.”

See the answer by Caroline.

See the answers by Heather and our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee.

See the answers by Jakub, Caroline, Kalista, and Chris.

See their answer to the question on “substantial differences between these different types of fundraising role.”

Similarly to Brittany’s description of GFI’s team, Caroline and Kalista explained that The Humane League’s fundraising team had eight (soon to be nine) people: a fundraising events manager, one major gifts officer (with a second currently being sought), “two administrative and support staff, one digital and mail marketing fundraiser... one mid-level staff person, who’s reaching out really widely and connecting with people,” and then Carolina and Kalista who are both “in major gifts and managers.” Chris explained to us that, at ProVeg, the fundraising roles are: “Head of Fundraising, Face-to-Face Fundraising, Online Fundraising, Major Donor Fundraising, and Foundations Fundraising.”

The descriptions provided by Heather and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee of their own roles seem more similar to the picture described by Jakub. Marcela is the only dedicated fundraiser at SVB, though the team focused on managing SVB’s membership programme could arguably be categorised as working in fundraising.

See the answers to the question beginning “To what extent do you believe...” in the interview findings spreadsheet.

Brittany Chambers estimated that someone working on major gifts might have 100 or 120 donors in their “portfolio.” In contrast, “somebody who’s fundraising for an annual fund, for donors that are more or less representative of the general public” might be managing a pool of 2000 donors. Our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee noted that their organisation had “50 priority [foundation] donor prospects.”

Interestingly, Caroline Mills of The Humane League estimated that “only 30% of people will want to have a connection with an organisation.” But fundraisers can work with the individuals — especially major donors — from among those 30% in order to help them maximise their impact.

See the answers by Brittany, Heather, and our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee.

This was noted by our anonymous Development Manager interviewee.
Compare the answers given by Chris, who focuses on this sort of work, to the other interviewees.

See Heather’s answer in the “Unplanned follow-up questions” column. If you’re interested in thinking about fundraising for “meta” organisations that provide funding for multiple different organisations, you might also be interested in this talk.

See the answers by Jakub, Caroline, Brittany, Heather, Chris, and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee.

See the answers by Marcela, Heather, our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee (in response to the question about the importance of fundraising expertise), and Chris.

See the answers by Marcela, our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee, Chris, and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee.

See the answers by Jakub, Caroline, Brittany (in response to the question about “What sorts of experience...”), Kalista Barter (in response to the question about “How applicable is experience...”), and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee.

See the answers by Jakub, our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee, and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee.

See the answers by Marcela, Jakub, Brittany, and our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee.

See the answer by Heather.

See the answers by Marcela and Chris.

See the answers by Jakub and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee.

According to the UK-based Institute of Fundraising, a successful fundraiser is:

- An excellent communicator,
- A skilled researcher,
- Highly organised,
- Brilliant with budgets,
- Enterprising and committed.

Another website claims that “all you really need is enthusiasm, drive, ambition, tenacity and confidence.” Other websites provide different or partly overlapping lists of suggested characteristics. See here, here, and here.

See Caroline’s answers to the “Unplanned follow-up questions.” Some more tips and discussion are provided here.

See the answers by Marcela, Caroline, and Brittany.

See the answers by Jakub, Caroline (in “What does a typical day involve?”), and Brittany.

See the answers by Caroline and Chris

See the answer by Caroline.

See the answers by Jakub and Chris.

See Jakub’s answers to the questions “What makes great fundraisers?” and “Can you gain fundraising expertise outside of fundraising roles?”

This may be less applicable to animal advocacy appeals. Faunalytics found in an online experiment that “there was no difference in donations whether the appeal used an identifiable victim or statistical victims.”
48 Key findings from these reports include:

- "The most promising demographics to target for new donations are people aged 55 and up and people with incomes of at least $50,000."
- "A small percentage of major donors contributed a large proportion of the total dollars to animal causes."
- "People who have previously donated to any animal charity gave 92% more money to farmed and companion animals than people who had not."
- "Appeals with no descriptive text at all" (i.e. just a picture of either a dog or a pig) "performed as well as the rest" (i.e. appeals with two paragraphs of descriptive text). This finding points to minimal appeals as the most cost-effective messaging strategy for donations, as it suggests that longer ads may be unnecessary."
- Donors to farmed animal advocacy charities are not all vegetarian or vegan and don't all participate in activism.
- "In order of association size, the causes disproportionately associated with giving to animals were: environmental charities (excluding animal-specific ones), charities supporting troops or veterans, [and] disaster relief. The ones disproportionately linked to not giving to animal causes were: places of worship [and] educational institutions and charities."

Of course, these principles might not hold true for all organisations or contexts; fundraisers and marketers may need to conduct further, more situation-specific testing.

49 This was mentioned at various points by Caroline, Kalista, Chris, and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee.

50 See Caroline’s answer to the question on “What sorts of experience...” See also Heather’s answer to the question on “How can someone assess their personal fit for fundraising roles?”

51 See Kalista’s answers to the questions on whether fundraising is a bottleneck and “Any other thoughts?” plus Chris’ answer to “How can someone assess their personal fit for fundraising roles?”

Interviewees also emphasised that fundraisers were providing a service to donors, such as by “demonstrating the impact of the donations and helping them facilitate the change they want to see in the world.” (See Caroline’s answer to the “Unplanned follow-up questions,” Kalista’s answer to “What makes great fundraisers?”, and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee’s answer to the unplanned follow-up question.) This way of looking at fundraising might help some individuals to overcome their discomfort around asking for money.

52 See Kalista’s answers for “What makes great fundraisers?” and “Any other thoughts?” and Chris’ answer to “How can someone assess their personal fit for fundraising roles?”

53 See their answer for “How can someone assess their personal fit for fundraising roles?”

54 The Association of Fundraising Professionals’ 2019 Compensation and Benefits Report found that the average salary of surveyed US fundraisers was $83,826 and the median was $72,500. Another website focused on the US puts the average for fundraising at $66,500; this is the second highest-paid of 13 different non-profit job categories considered and compares favorably to the average of “around $50,000.” This compares favourably with the US median household income of $62,450.

55 Kalista commented to us subsequently to her interview that “fundraisers are typically higher paid employees at all non-profits, but fundraisers at animal advocacy groups are typically lower paid than fundraisers at non-animal groups.” Heather agreed.

In our spot-check of advertised roles at animal advocacy nonprofits, the average salary for the 10 fundraising roles for which the salaries were advertised was $53,500. This compares to an average of $42,000 across all identified roles for which a salary was reported, and $50,500 for all identified roles except those identified in India, Mexico, Brazil, and France — the latter figure seems a more useful comparison, since none of the advertised fundraising roles were based in those countries, which tended to have lower salaries. Salaries were not consistently reported in job ads. Hence, the sample sizes for this finding were lower than for other findings in the spot-check.

56 Universities might have generic fundraising initiatives, like this one. You could also consider joining or starting an effective altruism group. After all, Giving What We Can (whose members have donated more than $126 million to charity) was started in a university!

57 See this short link on "workplace activism" for effective altruism and this example from Microsoft.

58 See brief discussions and suggestions by aspiring effective altruists here, here, here, here, and here.

As Caroline Mills of The Humane League noted, “anyone can do fundraising — they can start peer-to-peer fundraising... and build up those skills and that confidence in fundraising.”

59 Kalista suggested this in her answer to the question “What are the best ways to deliberately practice and develop fundraising expertise?” Our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee made a similar suggestion about pro-bono grant writing in answer to the question about “What sorts of experience are most useful for developing fundraising expertise?”
For example, if you’re planning a fundraising event to build some experience, a nonprofit might be keen to officially endorse the event, even if you haven’t volunteered with them before.

We spoke to one volunteer fundraiser who had been involved in organising fundraising events that focused on specific groups of tradespeople, such as organising an event for tattoo artists happy to donate some of their profits to the animal advocacy nonprofit that the fundraiser volunteered for.

In contrast, she noted that volunteering or interning opportunities that relate to major gifts or planned giving are exceptionally rare.

Brittany Chambers of the Good Food Institute gave the impression that fundraisers in the movement tend to be especially willing to help out and bring new people into fundraising roles (see her answer for the “Any other thoughts?” question).

Jakub Stencel of Anima International also advocated for applying “straight away” to animal advocacy fundraising roles, rather than seeking to develop external experience first. Similarly, Kalista Barter of The Humane League noted that if you start fundraising roles earlier “you’ll probably be further along” in your fundraising career than someone who did a degree first (see Kalista’s answer to “What sort of academic training is relevant, and how much does this matter?”).

Expenditure estimates come from visual inspection of the “Recent Financial History” sections in the “Comprehensive Reviews” of each charity. You can see the relevant calculations on the “Fundraising calculations” spreadsheet.

Without rounding, the average is $7,524,870.50. The Albert Schweitzer Foundation has received $3,029,046, Anima International / Open Cages has received $3,233,436, The Good Food Institute has received $6,500,000, and The Humane League has received $17,337,000. Former “Top Charities” Mercy For Animals and Animal Equality have received $9,444,000 and $5,889,990, respectively.

Indeed, given that these organisations’ budgets have been increasing rapidly, this may have been close to the total amount that those organisations could receive and still put to good use without steeply diminishing marginal returns.

Importantly, however, in CEA’s survey, Animal Charity Evaluators and the Good Food Institute were the only included organisations that focused primarily on animal issues, representing 3 out of 29 listed respondents, and 80,000 Hours’ surveys had similarly low representation of animal advocacy organisations. The cause areas that CEA and 80,000 Hours are most interested in (and hence were best represented in the surveys) do not seem to be substantially funding constrained (discussed, for example, in 80,000 Hours’ profile on earning to give) and 80,000 have noted that there are many other limitations of these results.

Using similar methodology, 80,000 Hours’ surveys from 2018 and 2017 had found similar results — 11 out of 4 and 1.5 out of 4 “funding-constrained” in 2017 and 2018, respectively, versus 2.6 out of 4 and 2.8 out of 4 “talent-constrained.” 80,000 Hours’ surveys also found that, in general, the organisations were willing to sacrifice a lot of extra donations to hold on to their most recent hires.

For instance, you might prioritise strategic research more highly, or believe that corporate welfare campaigns generate more complacency than momentum.

See footnote 1.

We asked participants to estimate the value of “X” in the following statement: “If your funding doubled for the next 3 years (vs staying constant) that would result in you accomplishing X% more good for the world over the next 3 years.” Of the 7 replies, 5 suggested that the organisation’s impact would increase by 100% or more (with an average estimated increase of 112%). These answers seem implausible to us. This would imply that additional funds have some sort of compound effect; i.e. that doubling the funding now can produce more than double the value, longer-term. This is not impossible, in the sense that well-invested resources can have a multiplier effect. However, we would have expected most organisations to answer with something like 50-95%, to represent diminishing marginal returns from additional funding; none of the 7 respondents provided answers within this range. Unless our own intuitions are just very different from those of the respondents, we expect that the answers reflect the confusing wording of the question and misunderstanding, rather than the respondents’ “true” estimates for the question. It’s also worth noting that 5 out of 7 organisations also gave even higher estimates for a similar question asking about the value of doubling their quality-adjusted pool of applicants to roles, and one-third of the respondents didn’t answer these two questions at all.

For example, even if organisations have excellent fundraisers, there may be limits on the total funding that is available to animal charities, or steeply diminishing returns on the marginal value of additional resources spent on fundraising. Alternatively, organisations could fundraise poorly, but find that funding is easily available anyway, though this issue might seem less of a pressing bottleneck, since the organisation’s funding needs would be met anyway.
The report notes that “at many nonprofits the development director position has been vacant for months, or even years. Executive directors at organizations where the development director position was vacant reported a median vacancy length of 6 months, with 46% reporting vacancies even longer than that. Among organizations with operating budgets of $1 million or less, the median vacancy length jumps to 12 months. Overall, 16% of executive directors at organizations with vacant development director positions reported vacancy lengths of two or more years, confirming anecdotal evidence that some organizations essentially give up on finding someone to fill the role for periods of time when multiple rounds of hiring have been unsuccessful.” It also notes that “nearly one in three executives are lukewarm about, or dissatisfied with, the performance of their current development directors. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of executives leading organizations with operating budgets of $1 million or less reported being “very satisfied” with their development director’s performance, compared to 41% of executives leading nonprofits of $10 million or more. Overall, 25% of executives reported that their previous development director was fired. The most frequent reasons cited for termination were poor performance in fund development (31%), poor performance generally (31%), and misfit with organizational culture (22%).”

The report notes that “the mean salary of development directors working in organizations with operating budgets under $1 million is $49,000, compared with a mean salary of $80,000 in organizations with operating budgets of $5 million-$10 million. And, compensation is significantly associated with skill levels. For instance, among development directors earning $50,000 or less, 23% have no experience or are novice at securing donations, compared with only 8% of development directors earning over $50,000.”

They also found that “the direct and indirect costs of finding a replacement” averaged $127,650.

The mean salary of development directors working in organizations with operating budgets under $1 million is $49,000, compared with a mean salary of $80,000 in organizations with operating budgets of $5 million-$10 million. And, compensation is significantly associated with skill levels. For instance, among development directors earning $50,000 or less, 23% have no experience or are novice at securing donations, compared with only 8% of development directors earning over $50,000.”

Dobrosława Gogolowa (CEO of Anima International) told us via email that they track “both major donors and grants together”; “for 2020 the major donor and grants together were 35% of our yearly income.”

Of 72 identified fundraising roles in our spot-check, 12 roles appeared to focus on digital fundraising, mass engagement, or member support services. Only 9 roles were very clearly focused on work with major donors, though it seems likely that other jobs do focus on major donors.

This comment was provided via email. Additionally, Heather noted that, “regarding ACE’s fundraising programs, currently we do all of it in-house. ACE does not have a direct mail program and we would likely outsource this fundraising task” if they introduced one, as “many charities” do. Chris noted that “ProVeg does have experience with outsourcing certain fundraising activities, but generally we try to do as much as practically possible ourselves.”

Brazil (6), Denmark (2), Estonia (1), France (3), Germany (5), India (3), Italy (4), Mexico (1), Netherlands (1), Poland (4), Spain (1), United Kingdom (6), and the US (35).

See the answers by Jakub and Kalista.

See the answer by Jakub.

See the answers by Caroline, Kalista, and Heather.

See the answers by Kalista and Heather.

See the answer by Jakub.

See the answer by Caroline.

Their explanation of this categorisation is that the “high performers” are “executive director and development director respondents whose organizations have created a broad base of support from individuals—25% or more of their annual budget—and who rated their overall fundraising program as ‘very effective.”

Of course, the methodology between our spot-check and the 2013 report differ and we would expect the proportion of employees with “previous development experience” to be larger than the proportion currently in fundraising roles.

This site claims that “fundraising can even lead to the leadership of a nonprofit,” though no evidence is provided for the claim. One reviewer of this skills profile also commented that “From my personal experience with both fundraising and leadership, I think someone who's really good at fundraising would generally be well-suited to leadership, and would likely be quick to be re-hired (selling yourself in a hiring round is not unlike selling your org to a donor).”

Several interviewees mentioned that sales would be useful experience for fundraising roles, as noted in the section below on “What sorts of experience are most useful for developing fundraising expertise?” The experience seems likely to be somewhat useful if transferred in the opposite direction too, i.e. from fundraising to sales rather than from sales to fundraising.

See the answers by Caroline, Heather, and our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee to the “What sorts of experience...” question and Brittany to the “How applicable is experience...” question. The answers to the “Can you gain fundraising expertise outside of fundraising roles?” question are also relevant here.
See the answers by Marcela, Caroline, Brittany, and Kalista, and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee.

See the answers by Kalista and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee.

See the answers by Marcela, Caroline, and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee.

See footnote 91. Jakub Stencel of Anima International warned that for-profit experience can be misleading and harmful in the "Can you gain fundraising expertise outside of fundraising roles?" question.

See their answer to the questions on "What sorts of experience are most useful for developing fundraising expertise?" and "any other thoughts?"

See the answers by Caroline, Kalista, Heather, and our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee ("Can you gain fundraising expertise outside of fundraising roles?" question).

See the answers by Heather and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee (emphasising digital marketing specifically).

See the answers by Kalista and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee.

See the answers by Kalista (noted in the question on "If someone were to try out...") and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee.

See the answer by Chris.

See the answer by Heather.

See the answer by Brittany.

See the answer by Brittany.

See the answer by Chris.

See the answer by our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee.

See the paragraph above beginning "We asked about the previous..."

The question asked was: "Imagine that you are leaving your current role and your organisation needs to find a replacement. Imagine that one candidate for the position has excellent experience and understanding of the animal advocacy / animal-free food community, but lacks fundraising experience. Another candidate has excellent experience with fundraising but lacks direct experience in animal advocacy / animal-free food. Which candidate do you think would be better at performing your role? (Assume that all other variables are equal, including their level of commitment to the cause.)"

The precise wording used varied between "animal advocacy," "effective animal advocacy," "animal-free food," or combinations of these terms, depending on which terms seemed most appropriate for the interviewee.

Marcela and Jakub noted that formal experience was not as useful an indicator of performance as relevant character traits and skills. Several interviewees emphasised at various points in the interviews that passion for the cause was a key characteristic (see footnote 31). This is relevant because this question asked interviewees to imagine that an individual's alignment with and dedication to the animal advocacy or animal-free food movements was equal in either case; this seems unlikely, since previous engagement through volunteering or donating seems likely to be an indicator of mission alignment and dedication.

Marcela (fundraising), Jakub (animal advocacy), Chris (fundraising), and our anonymous Development Manager interviewee (fundraising) were slightly reluctant to pick one side or keen to emphasise the caveats to their answer. Carolina (fundraising), Heather (fundraising), and our anonymous Foundation Relations Manager interviewee (fundraising) offered more forthright answers.

As demonstrated by the contrast between Jakub's answers and the other answers, a limitation of asking this question is that individuals tend to believe that their own experiences were more useful preparation for their role types than the alternatives might have been, presumably because the benefits that these experiences brought to them are more salient to them. Interviewees for several of our skills profile have noted explicitly that their views might be "biased" by their own experiences.

See here and here.

See the answers to the question "What sort of academic training is relevant, and how much does this matter" by Brittany, Kalista, and Chris.
One site claims that “Many development directors have a bachelor’s degree or master’s degree in business administration, public affairs, or organizational management.” Another suggests that “relevant” subjects that “may give you an advantage” include “marketing, media and communications, public relations, [and] business studies.” Another site claims that “although fundraisers have a variety of academic backgrounds, employers typically prefer a candidate with a bachelor’s degree in public relations, journalism, communications, English, or business. Degrees in other subjects also may be acceptable.”

We looked through the educational qualifications of 28 individuals that were identified via our identified in our spot-check of animal advocacy nonprofits and that listed their educational qualifications on their LinkedIn. Of those 28, 10 had some form of graduate qualification. A few degree types occurred more than once, including journalism, politics, psychology, and philosophy. 6 appeared to focus on natural sciences, with the rest being social sciences or humanities. Only one qualification — a masters in “Fundraising for non-profit and public bodies” — was specifically focused on fundraising.

See the answers by Jakub, Caroline, Brittany (in the “What sort of academic training…” question),

See the answers by Caroline, Brittany (in the “What sort of academic training…” question), . We didn’t ask him specifically, but we think Jakub would agree.

See, for example, the first tab here, though there are some differences between fundraising and management and leadership (which that spreadsheet focuses on).

Compared to “management and leadership,” there seemed to be fewer popular books on fundraising but more “how-to” guides and manuals. Blinkist has a number of categories that may be relevant, such as “psychology,” “communication skills,” and “marketing and sales,” but no categories specifically for “fundraising” or “nonprofits.”