

Press Release

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Bay Area Nonprofits Need More “Professional” Volunteers

Nonprofits need expert help to tackle business issues, according to United Way survey

SAN FRANCISCO, June 7, 2007 – Although 91% of Bay Area nonprofits rely on volunteers and in-kind donations to serve the community, only 8% have adequate volunteer support, according to United Way of the Bay Area’s (UWBA) fifth annual Nonprofit Pulse Survey.

Professional expertise was cited as the most-needed volunteer resource by local nonprofits, with 56% of respondents stating they needed more in-kind support from specialists, such as pro-bono legal or marketing counsel. Forty-four percent of respondents said they need more board-level volunteers.

“Volunteers can help nonprofits significantly increase the quality and level of services, as well as reduce costs,” said Anne Wilson, CEO of United Way of the Bay Area. “As local nonprofits work harder than ever to serve our community’s growing needs, United Way is expanding our volunteer programs and enhancing our long-standing partnerships with the Volunteer Centers of the Bay Area to help meet increased demand. I encourage individuals and employers to go beyond their checkbooks and increase their volunteer support as well.”

Experts Needed to Tackle Business Issues

Underscoring the need for skilled volunteers, nonprofits said they lack resources to tackle critical business issues. For example, only 25% of Bay Area nonprofits surveyed have a business continuity plan, while just 11% of respondents say their plan has been tested recently. Thirty-two percent indicate they do not have the time or resources to create a plan.

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“We are provided with constant reminders – such as the recent Hollywood fire and tornadoes in Kansas – that business continuity plans are essential for nonprofits,” said GERALYNE Mahoney, a partner who directs nonprofit services at accounting firm Burr Pilger & Mayer.

Mahoney continued, “Most nonprofit organizations have board members with a disaster-response plan established at their place of business; these volunteers could provide the expertise to help nonprofits prepare for disaster. This is just one example of how volunteers can contribute their talent to nonprofits that critically need professional assistance.”

Aaron Hurst, founder and president of Taproot Foundation, which links professional volunteers with nonprofits, said, “Nonprofits have the greatest potential to address our society’s most challenging problems, but, as evidenced by the survey, often lack the resources to fulfill that potential. The good news is the professional support that nonprofits need is abundant in the Bay Area. Through pro-bono service, local professionals can seize this enormous opportunity to combine their expertise with their desire to help the community.”

Revenue Increases Offset by Service Demand

Revenues increased for a majority of Bay Area nonprofits: Fifty-three percent of respondents reported revenue increases in 2006, with 31% reporting their revenue increased by 10% or more. Revenues were boosted by increased contributions from multiple sources: individuals, corporations, foundations and the public sector. Looking ahead, 51% of respondents project revenues will increase in 2007, while 24% expect revenues to remain about the same.

Mahoney cautions that revenue increases may be offset by continued increases in service demand: 69% of survey respondents reporting an increase in service demand in 2006 (vs. 62% in 2005). Seventy-one percent of respondents projected continued service-demand increases in 2007. To address this growing need, 52% of respondents expect to boost existing service levels this year while 38% plan to maintain the level of services they already provide. Forty percent of respondents hope to add services in 2007 that they did not previously provide.

Despite these challenges, Bay Area nonprofits executives feel upbeat about the future: 92% of respondents said they are optimistic about the future prospects for their organizations.

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Connecting with Local Volunteer Opportunities

To volunteer, visit United Way of the Bay Area's website -- www.uwba.org. Click on the "Volunteer" button, and enter your zipcode to find volunteer projects in your neighborhood.

The online volunteer database, developed in partnership with the Volunteer Centers of the Bay Area, lists current volunteer opportunities at hundreds of Bay Area nonprofit agencies.

About the Nonprofit Pulse Survey

United Way of the Bay Area conducted its fifth annual Nonprofit Pulse Survey in partnership with Burr, Pilger & Mayer LLP, in April 2007. The survey was sent to 1,916 nonprofit organizations in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma Counties. Respondents totaled 347 for a return rate of 18%. The majority of respondents in this year's survey categorized themselves as providing education, health and human services.

About United Way of the Bay Area

United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to community impact. UWBA serves Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Solano Counties. Our mission is to be the catalyst that enables people to strengthen their communities by investing in one another. Through the Bay Area Community Fund, United Way supports more than 250 local programs that fight poverty and create opportunities for children, youth, families and neighborhoods to thrive. In San Francisco and Santa Clara Counties, 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember phone number operated by United Way that connects people in need — as well as individuals seeking to give — with community services. United Way's introduction of 2-1-1 is the first step in plans to promote and establish 2-1-1 service throughout the Bay Area. For more information, visit www.uwba.org.

About Burr, Pilger & Mayer LLP

Burr, Pilger & Mayer LLP (BPM) is a 250-person accounting and consulting firm with offices in San Francisco, Palo Alto, Walnut Creek and San Jose. BPM provides a full range of services, from the traditional tax planning and assurance services to business consulting services for all ages of an organization from start-up to process improvement and turn around. BPM has been serving the nonprofit sector since their inception over 20 years ago. In addition to providing a full range of services, BPM has been offering quality training sessions for their clients and friends in the nonprofit sector for the last eleven years. Over 3,000 nonprofit staff, management, and board members have attended these popular roundtables. For more information, please visit www.bpmlp.com.

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Note to editors:

- A fact sheet with graphs summarizing the survey results is available at www.uwba.org.
- Nonprofit executives from each county, who completed the survey, are available for interviews. Please call United Way's Maria Stokes at 415-808-4264 for contact information.