



COVID-19 JOBS UPDATE, OCTOBER 2021: Nonprofit recovery rises to 70% of initial job losses

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Online at: <http://ccss.jhu.edu/october-2021-jobs>

In our [continuing effort](#) to track the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic on nonprofit employment, this report documents our estimates of COVID-induced nonprofit job losses through October 2021, as reflected in the [October BLS Employment Situation Report](#). Following an anemic September, October's report brought good news—with nonprofits adding nearly 45,000 jobs during the month, the sector has now recovered 70% of the 1.64 million jobs initially estimated to have been lost during the first three months of the pandemic.

Part 1 of this report spotlights the changes in nonprofit employment in October 2021. **Part 2** then details the recovery of nonprofit jobs over the past several months and notes where that leaves nonprofit employment as of October compared to the pre-pandemic period. Against this backdrop, **Part 3** provides an updated estimate of the time it will take the nonprofit sector to return to pre-pandemic employment levels based on the recovery record from January through October 2021.

PART 1: CHANGE IN NONPROFIT JOBS IN OCTOBER 2021

As shown in **Figure 1**, October saw a significant gain of 44,576 nonprofit jobs, reducing the total lost jobs by 8.3% of the 536,073 jobs still lost as of September.¹

Of the major fields of nonprofit activity that we track, the health care field had the strongest recovery in terms of jobs added in October, regaining over 16,100 estimated jobs, or of 7.5% of the jobs still missing in this field as of September. Of note, October 2021 was the first month since the onset of the pandemic that recorded a slight recovery of jobs in nonprofit nursing and residential care facilities, which added an estimated 1,300 workers during the month. However, jobs in this sub-field remain down by over 139,000 vs. pre-pandemic staffing levels.

FIGURE 1 • Estimated changes in nonprofit jobs, October vs. September 2021, by field

	Nonprofit jobs lost as of September 2021 [^] vs. February 2020	Change in nonprofit jobs in October vs. September 2021 [^]	Percent of remaining lost nonprofit jobs regained or lost in October 2021 [^]
Educational services	-133,296	12,060	9.0%
Religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, & similar	-39,895	-1,793	-4.5%
Arts, entertainment, & recreation	-50,861	3,243	6.4%
Social assistance	-60,235	3,987	6.6%
Health care	-216,608	16,159	7.5%
Other fields*	-4,503	2,893	64.3%
TOTAL, ALL FIELDS	-536,073	44,576	8.3%

[^] Reflects BLS adjustments for August and September 2021.

* Includes: Construction; Manufacturing; Wholesale trade; Retail trade; Professional and technical services; Transportation and warehousing; Information; Finance and insurance; and Accommodation and food services. Totals ~4.4% of total nonprofit employment.

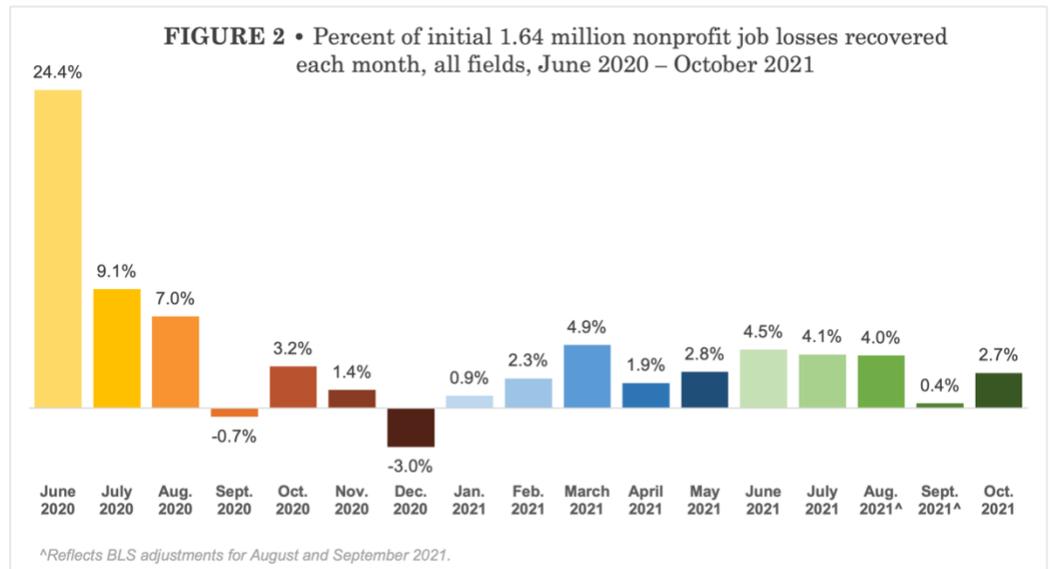
Educational institutions meanwhile added over 12,000 total jobs, or 9% of the jobs still missing as of September. Social assistance organizations added nearly 4,000 workers during the month, reducing the number of jobs missing in this field by 6.6%; and nonprofit arts, entertainment, and recreational organizations continued to recover, adding an estimated 3,200 jobs during the month, or 6.4% of the still-missing jobs in this field. On the other hand, religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, and similar organizations lost an estimated nearly 1,800 additional jobs during the month, an increase of 4.5% in missing jobs vs. September's staffing levels.

¹ Our [September update](#) found that, as of September 2021, nonprofit job losses stood at an estimated 559,347. However, BLS routine revisions for August and September resulted in a new estimate for September, which we have incorporated in Figure 1. BLS monthly revisions result from additional reports received from businesses and government agencies since the last published estimates and from the recalculation of seasonal factors. For more information, see: [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics October Employment Situation Report \(11/5/2021\)](#).

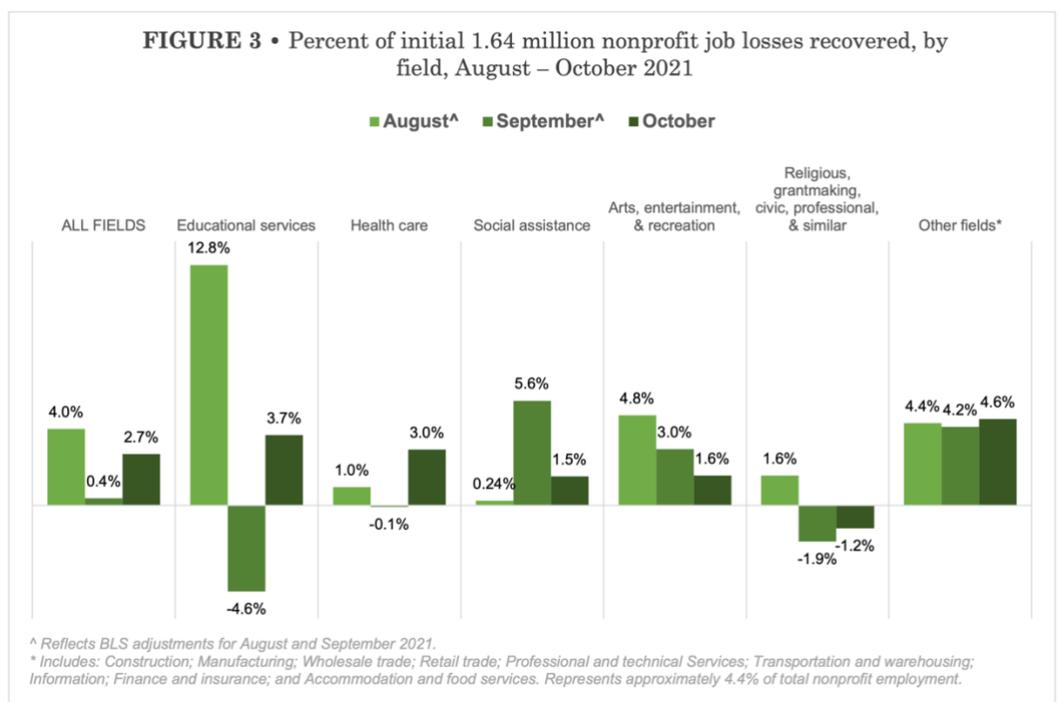
PART 2: TRACKING THE RECOVERY OF NONPROFIT JOBS

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. nonprofit institutions accounted for at least 12.5 million total jobs. As reported in our [2020 Nonprofit Employment Report](#), during the first three months of the pandemic (i.e., March, April, and May 2020), nonprofits lost a conservatively estimated 1.64 million of those jobs, reducing the nonprofit workforce by 13.2% as of May 2020. This section examines the progress made by nonprofits in recovering those lost jobs over the ensuing months.²

As shown in **Figure 2**, in June, July, and August 2020 40.6% of these initial 1.64 million lost nonprofit jobs were recovered. Beginning in September 2020, however, this recovery slowed significantly, with the months of September 2020–February 2021 seeing a combined recovery of just 4.2% of the initial lost jobs overall. A stronger recovery trend began in March 2021, with March through August seeing a combined recovery of 22.3% of initial estimated job losses. Following a minimal recovery in September, October saw a rebound, with 2.7% of initial estimated job losses recovered. Thus, over the full recovery period (i.e., June 2020–October 2021), **nonprofits have recovered approximately 70% of the jobs lost as of May 2020.**



As shown in **Figure 3**, all but one major field of nonprofit activity recorded a positive recovery during October 2021, with educational institutions regaining 3.7% of their initial jobs lost; health care institutions restoring 3% of their missing jobs; and social assistance and the arts institutions respectively recovering 1.5% and 1.6% of their initial losses during the month. The one exception was religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, and similar organizations, which experienced fresh losses dropping the jobs recovery in this field back by 1.2% in October.



² To estimate nonprofit job losses, we began with the latest available BLS data on nonprofit employment by field, which cover 2017, and calculated the nonprofit shares of total private employment by field as of this date. We then applied these shares to the monthly changes from pre-COVID (i.e., February 2020) levels in private employment by field as reported in the monthly BLS Employment Situation Reports to derive our estimates of monthly changes in nonprofit employment by field, such as those reflected in Figures 1 and 3 of this report. For more on these estimates, see: Salamon & Newhouse, "The 2020 Nonprofit Employment Report," *Nonprofit Economic Data Bulletin no. 48*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, June 2020), available at: bit.ly/2020-NP-Empi-Rpt

Over the full recovery period from June 2020 through October 2021, educational institutions have thus recovered approximately 62.5% of the estimated 323,000 jobs lost as of May 2020; health care institutions have recovered 63.4% of their estimated 547,500 early job losses; social assistance organizations have recovered 78% of their initial estimated 259,000 job losses; arts, entertainment, and recreational institutions recovered approximately 77% of the initial 206,000 jobs lost; and religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, and similar organizations have recovered 72% of the estimated 147,000 job losses. [Click here to view field-level recovery data for all months.](#)

As shown in **Figure 4**, the nonprofit workforce as of October 2021 is estimated to be approximately 491,000 jobs—or 3.9%—smaller vs. its estimated pre-pandemic level. These missing jobs included 13.4% of pre-pandemic workers in nonprofit arts and entertainment organizations; 6% of those in education; 5% of workers in religious, grantmaking, and civic associations; 4% of workers in nonprofit social service institutions; and 3% of workers in health care institutions.

FIGURE 4 • Estimated nonprofit job losses, October 2021 vs. February 2020, by field

	Estimated number of jobs as of February 2020*	Estimated nonprofit job losses, October 2021 [^] vs. February 2020	Percent of jobs lost, October 2021 [^] vs. February 2020
Health care	6,777,730	-200,449	-3.0%
Educational services	2,003,634	-121,236	-6.1%
Social assistance	1,528,920	-56,249	-3.7%
Arts, entertainment, & recreation	355,965	-47,617	-13.4%
Religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, & similar	818,562	-41,688	-5.1%
Other fields*	555,421	-1,610	-0.3%
TOTAL, ALL FIELDS	12,482,741	-491,497	-3.9%

* Based on 2017 BLS data, latest year available.

[^] Reflects BLS adjustments for August and September 2021.

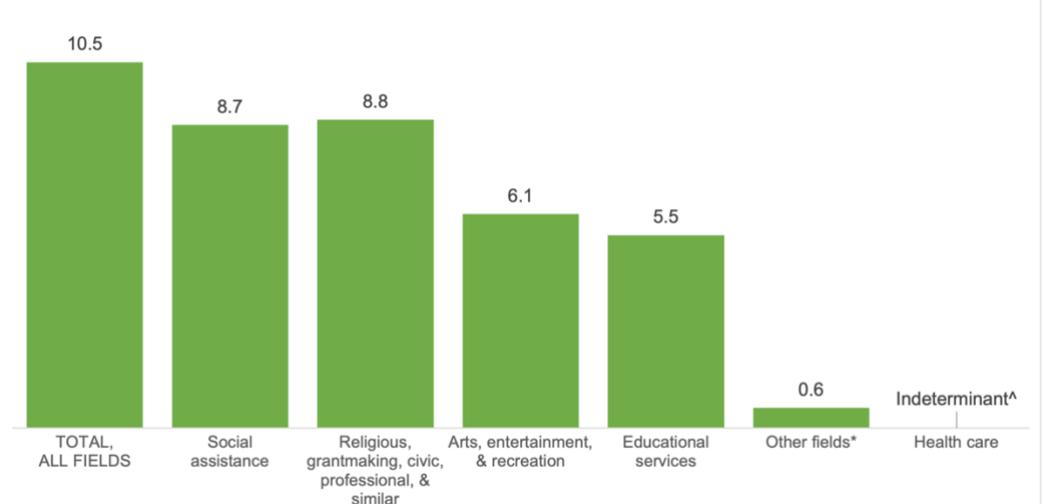
* Includes: Construction; Manufacturing; Wholesale trade; Retail trade; Professional and technical services; Transportation and warehousing; Information; Finance and insurance; and Accommodation and food services. Totals ~4.4% of total nonprofit employment.

PART 3: ESTIMATED MONTHS TO RECOVERY

Following the process developed for our [June 2021 report](#), we have updated our estimates of the likely time to full recovery of nonprofit employment back to pre-pandemic levels. To do so, we assumed that the average rate of nonprofit job recovery from January through October 2021 will prevail moving forward. With an estimated 491,497 nonprofit jobs still lost as of the end of October, and an average of 46,946 nonprofit jobs recovered per month over this period, this suggests it would take the sector **10.5 months to return to its pre-COVID level of employment**, as shown in **Figure 5**. This estimate represents a modest improvement over our September prediction of 12.5 months, with the sector’s full recovery on track for August or September 2022.

Also shown in Figure 5 are the projected times to full recovery of nonprofit employment in the various fields of nonprofit activity using the same approach. However, as reflected in the figure, we are unable to estimate a time-to-full-recovery for the health care field, which has seen an average of just 2,300 jobs recovered per month over this period. As such, we have no reliable basis for estimating its future recovery.

FIGURE 5 • Projected months to full recovery of nonprofit jobs, by field, based on average job recovery rates from January through October 2021[^]



* Includes: Construction; Manufacturing; Wholesale Trade; Retail Trade; Professional and Technical Services; Transportation and Warehousing; Information; Finance and Insurance; and Accommodation and food services. Represents approximately 4.4% of total nonprofit employment.

[^] Due to an overall negligible recovery over the estimation period, we cannot determine time-to-recovery for the health care field. See text for more detail.

CONCLUSION

Fortunately, October's recovery, coupled with upward revisions to August and September data in this month's BLS jobs report, returned all months of 2021 to the positive column in terms of the recovery of nonprofit jobs. Most notably, with the jobs recovered in October, the sector reached an important milestone, with 70% of the initial estimated nonprofit job losses restored. While it took 17 months to reach this milestone, it is a hopeful sign that—barring a major resurgence of the pandemic over the winter months—the sector is on track to return to full employment within the year.

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About the Johns Hopkins Nonprofit Economic Data Project (NED) | [link](#)

Nonprofit organizations are facing increased pressures in states and localities throughout the United States, but the nonprofit sector's ability to respond to these pressures has been limited by a lack of timely information about how prevailing economic realities are affecting the sector. The Johns Hopkins Nonprofit Economic Data Project (NED) is helping to tackle this problem by charting economic trends in the nonprofit sector including how employment, wages, and finances have changed over time and in relation to other industries. Moreover, the project is able to analyze these data at the national, regional, state, and local levels, and to focus on particular subsectors—such as nursing homes, hospitals, home health centers, education, social services, and the arts. A collaboration between the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, state employment security agencies, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and state nonprofit associations, the NED Project has thus far produced almost 50 state, county, and regional [Nonprofit Economic Data Bulletins](#) since its founding in 2001, yielding a vital resource for understanding the nonprofit sector.

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