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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 December 2021, as reflected in the [December BLS Employment Situation Report](#).

**Part 1** of this report spotlights the changes in nonprofit employment in December 2021. **Part 2** then details the recovery of nonprofit jobs over the past several months and notes where that leaves nonprofit employment as of December 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 during 2021.

## PART 1: CHANGE IN NONPROFIT JOBS IN DECEMBER 2021

As shown in **Figure 1**, nonprofits added an estimated 9,246 jobs during December, reducing the total lost jobs by 2% of the 468,116 jobs still estimated to be missing as of November.<sup>1</sup>

Of the major fields of nonprofit activity that we track, religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, and similar organizations recovered the highest share of their missing jobs, with 2,869 added workers representing an 8% reduction in the number of jobs missing in these institutions as of the previous month. Social assistance organizations,

meanwhile, added the largest absolute number of jobs in December, hiring nearly 3,800 workers during the month and reducing the number of jobs missing in this field by 7%.

Also in the positive column were educational institutions, which added nearly 2,500 workers in December, or just over 2% of the jobs still missing as of November. Arts, entertainment, and recreational organizations, meanwhile, were estimated to have added just 100 total workers in December, or just 0.2% of the still-missing jobs in this field.

Nonprofit health care institutions, however, took a small step backward in December shedding an additional 1,300 jobs overall, increasing the number of missing workers in the overall health care field by 0.7% as of the end of the year. Job losses during December in hospitals and nursing and residential care facilities—though these losses were partially offset by gains in ambulatory health care services.

**FIGURE 1** • Estimated changes in nonprofit jobs, December vs. November 2021, by field

	Nonprofit jobs lost as of November 2021 <sup>^</sup> vs. February 2020	Change in number of nonprofit jobs in December 2021 <sup>^</sup>	Percent of remaining lost nonprofit jobs regained or lost in December 2021 <sup>^</sup>
Religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, & similar	-35,951	2,869	8.0%
Social assistance	-55,015	3,781	6.9%
Educational services	-115,277	2,412	2.1%
Arts, entertainment, & recreation	-44,700	109	0.2%
Health care	-194,758	-1,347	-0.7%
<b>TOTAL, ALL FIELDS</b>	<b>-468,116</b>	<b>9,246</b>	<b>2.0%</b>

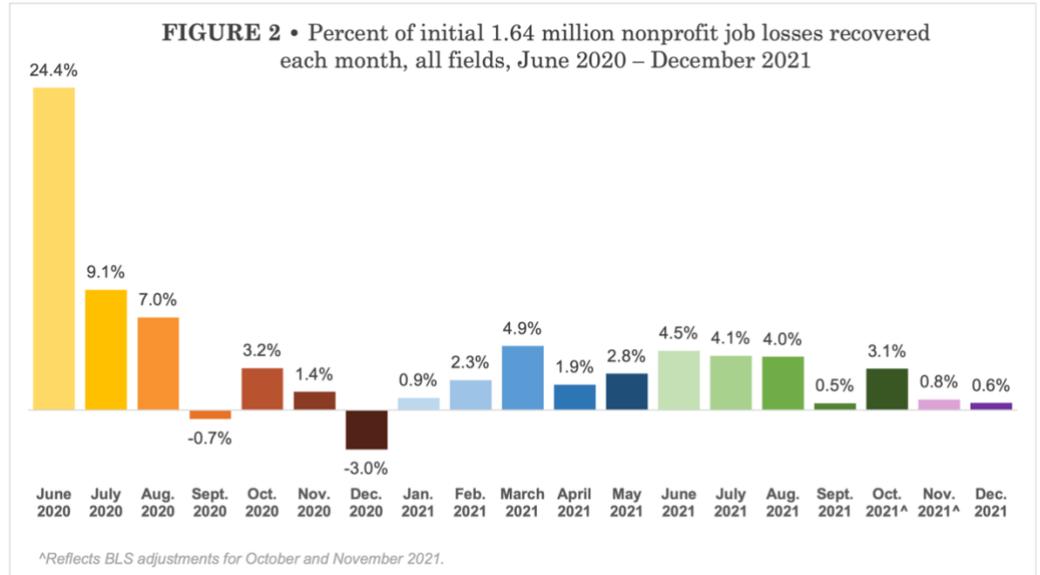
<sup>^</sup> Reflects BLS adjustments for October and November 2021.

<sup>1</sup> Our [November update](#) found that, as of November 2021, nonprofit job losses stood at an estimated 485,190. However, BLS routine revisions for October and November resulted in this new estimate, 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 December Employment Situation Report \(1/7/2022\)](#).

## PART 2: TRACKING THE RECOVERY OF NONPROFIT JOBS

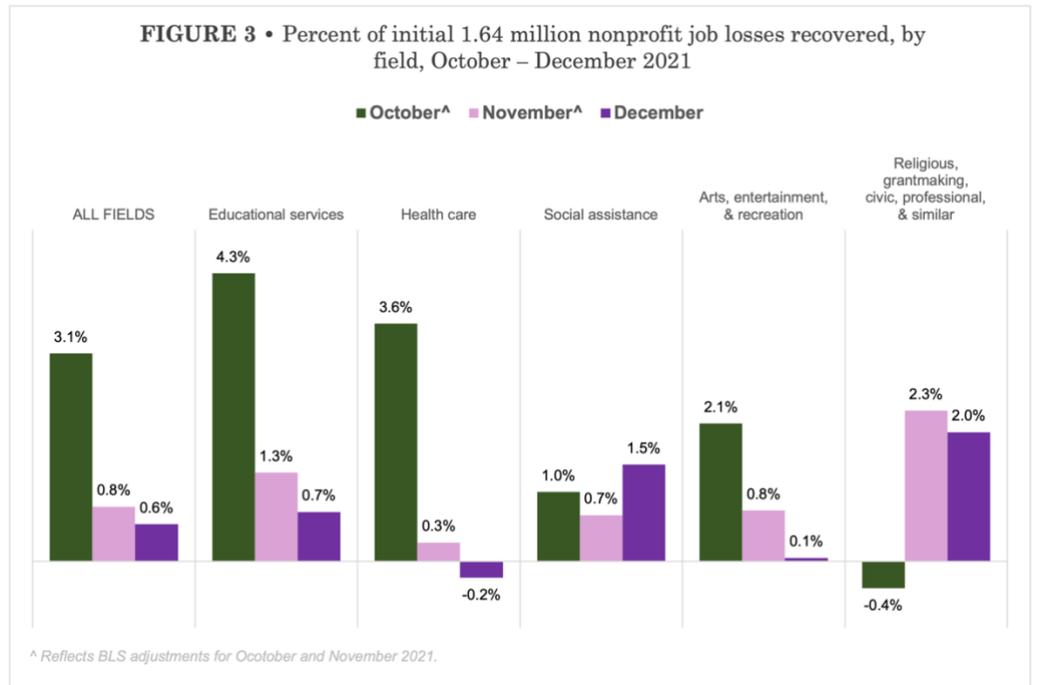
Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. nonprofit institutions accounted for at least 12.5 million total jobs. As reported in our [2020 Nonprofit Employment Report](#), during the first three months of the pandemic (i.e., March, April, and May 2020), nonprofits lost a conservatively estimated 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.<sup>2</sup>

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 final four months of 2020 (September - December) seeing a combined recovery of just 1% of the initial lost jobs overall—an average of just 0.2% per month. During the first 3 quarters of 2021, nonprofits enjoyed a more consistent recovery trend, regaining a combined 26% of initial estimated job losses, or an average of nearly 3% per month.



Unfortunately, this trend was not sustained in the final quarter of the year, despite a relatively strong showing in October 2021. Thus, with December’s overall recovery of just 0.6%, the final quarter of 2021 saw a combined recovery of just 4.5% of initial estimated jobs lost, for a monthly average of just 1.5%—or half the average rate seen during the previous three quarters. Thus, as of the end of 2021, **nonprofits have recovered approximately 72.1% of the jobs estimated to have been lost as of May 2020.**

As shown in **Figure 3**, all but one major field of nonprofit activity recorded a positive recovery during December 2021. Among the major fields of nonprofit activity, religious, grantmaking, civil, and professional associations, regained the largest share their pre-pandemic workforce, at 2%. Nonprofits operating in the social assistance field recovered 1.5% of their workforce in December, while educational institutions and arts, entertainment, and recreational organization each regained under 1% of their pre-pandemic workforces. The overall health care, however, saw a small retraction, setting the jobs recovery in this field back by 0.2% in December.



<sup>2</sup> 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](https://bit.ly/2020-NP-Empi-Rpt)

Over the full recovery period from June 2020 through December 2021, educational institutions have recovered approximately 65% of the estimated 323,000 jobs lost as of May 2020; health care institutions have recovered 64% of their estimated 547,500 early job losses; social assistance organizations have just over 80% of their initial estimated 259,000 job losses; arts, entertainment, and recreational institutions recovered approximately 78% of the initial 206,000 lost jobs; and religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, and similar organizations have recovered 77.5% of their 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 December 2021 is estimated to be approximately 459,000 jobs—or 3.7%—smaller vs. its estimated pre-pandemic level. These still-missing jobs include 12.5% of pre-pandemic workers in nonprofit arts and entertainment organizations; 5.6% of those in education; 4% of workers in religious, grantmaking, and civic associations; and 3.4% of workers in nonprofit social service institutions.

Of particular note, while the overall nonprofit health care workforce remained down by over 196,000 estimated jobs, or 2.9% of the pre-pandemic nonprofit health care workforce, over 144,000—or nearly three-quarters of these missing jobs—were identified as being in nursing and residential care facilities.

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

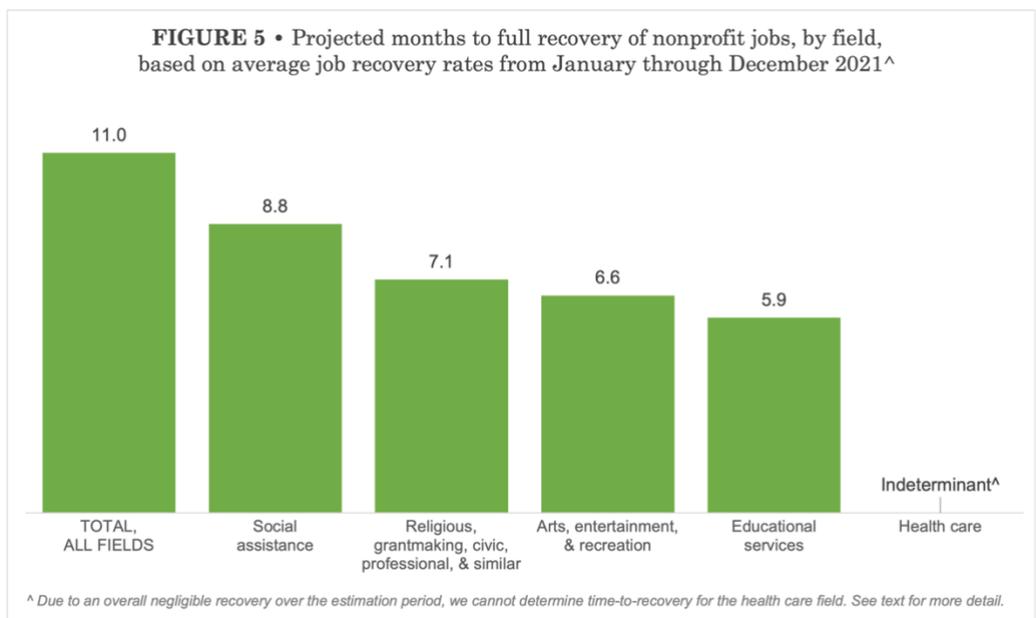
	Estimated number of jobs as of February 2020 <sup>o</sup>	Estimated nonprofit jobs missing, December 2021 <sup>^</sup> vs. February 2020	Percent of jobs still missing, December 2021 <sup>^</sup> vs. February 2020
Health care	6,777,730	-196,105	-2.9%
Educational services	2,003,634	-112,865	-5.6%
Social assistance	1,528,920	-51,234	-3.4%
Arts, entertainment, & recreation	355,965	-44,591	-12.5%
Religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, & similar	818,562	-33,082	-4.0%
<b>TOTAL, ALL FIELDS</b>	<b>12,482,741</b>	<b>-458,871</b>	<b>-3.7%</b>

<sup>o</sup> Based on 2017 BLS data, latest year available.  
<sup>^</sup> Reflects BLS adjustments for October and November 2021.

### 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 over the course of 2021 will prevail moving forward. With an estimated 458,871 nonprofit jobs still missing as of the end of December, and an average of 41,841 nonprofit jobs recovered per month during 2021, this suggests it would take the sector **11 months to return to its pre-COVID level of employment**, as shown in **Figure 5**.

**FIGURE 5 • Projected months to full recovery of nonprofit jobs, by field, based on average job recovery rates from January through December 2021<sup>^</sup>**



<sup>^</sup> 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.

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, largely due to continued losses in the nursing and residential care field. As such, we have no reliable basis for estimating its future recovery.

## CONCLUSION

As the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic drew to a close, the nonprofit sector's resilience and the overall economic recovery found this crucial set of institutions in a significantly better place than where they stood at the beginning of 2021. The twin challenges of the unpredictable nature of the on-going pandemic and significant difficulties in hiring now coming to light it is difficult to predict what the future holds for the nation's third largest employer as we enter into 2022. With nearly a half million of the sector's pre-pandemic workers still missing from the workforce, nonprofits have a steep hill to climb as they continue their critical work to assist and support the recovery of their communities.

This marks the 18<sup>th</sup> and final report issued by the Center documenting our estimates of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the nonprofit workforce. While we will no longer be issuing monthly reports, we have created a new summary [data dashboard](#) which will update as new data becomes available.

We undertook these estimates in an attempt to provide baseline against which to measure the response of the sector once updated official BLS nonprofit employment data are released, to surface areas of immediate concern, and to provide the sector and its advocates with a the tools needed to push for interventions needed to support this crucial set of institutions. It is our sincere hope that these reports have been of use in these endeavors.

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The Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies is a leading source of ground-breaking research and knowledge about the nonprofit sector, social investing, and the tools of government. Working in collaboration with governments, international organizations, investment innovators, and colleagues around the world, the Center encourages the use of this knowledge to strengthen and mobilize the capabilities and resources of the public, nonprofit, and for-profit sectors to address the complex problems that face the world today. The Center conducts research and educational programs that seek to improve current understanding, analyze emerging trends, and promote promising innovations in the ways that government, civil society, and business can collaborate to address social and environmental challenges.

### 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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