



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | December 6, 2012

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Also available at: [ccss.jhu.edu/what-do-nonprofits-stand-for](http://ccss.jhu.edu/what-do-nonprofits-stand-for)



## NEW REPORT: WHAT DO NONPROFITS STAND FOR? RENEWING THE NONPROFIT VALUE COMMITMENT

This is a crucial time for nonprofits around the country. As the federal government moves to avoid the fiscal cliff, [reduce or cap the federal tax deduction for charitable contributions](#), which have become an increasingly common feature of budget-balancing measures from [both ends of the political spectrum](#). And on the state and local levels, governments are imposing new [taxes and fees](#) on nonprofits in order to make ends meet. Meanwhile, shifts in government payment methods that advantage for-profit businesses have resulted in a [reduction of nonprofit market share](#) in many traditional nonprofit fields. Over the past decade, the nonprofit share of private employment has decreased by nearly 8 percent in social assistance, by 4 percent in education, and by 2 percent in health care as for-profit employment in those fields has expanded.

These ongoing challenges are not happening in a vacuum. Increasingly, the realities of nonprofit operations have diverged from the popular understanding of what a nonprofit is and how it operates. As Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies director [Lester Salamon](#) states: “In recent years, nonprofits have responded to the fiscal pressures they are under by becoming more commercial in their operations. But this has pulled them away from their traditional values and put their public support at risk. Now is therefore the time for nonprofits to renew their value commitments and to develop the tools needed to communicate those values to the sector’s stakeholders in government, the public, and within the sector itself.”

In order to start that process, the Johns Hopkins [Listening Post Project](#) conducted a first-ever survey to gauge the thinking within the nonprofit community around the sector’s values. Over 750 nonprofits of various sizes operating in the three core nonprofit fields of human services, community development, and the arts responded to a survey asking them to rate how important a set of key values were to the operation of their organizations. The survey revealed widespread consensus around the sector’s key values, important evidence that nonprofit organizations are embodying these values in their work, but also serious concerns about how effectively these values are being conveyed to important sector stakeholders.

By offering nonprofits a common set of words and concepts to frame the discussion of their public benefit, this research promises to help nonprofits better understand their own special value and to articulate it to key stakeholders.



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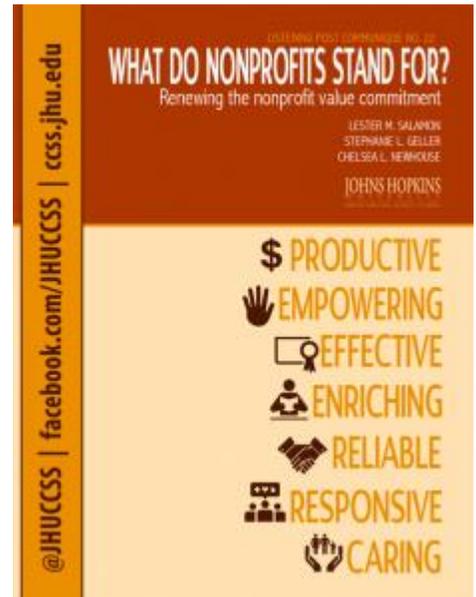
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“These values reinforce the fact that the not-for-profit sector is an essential component of American society because it brings out the best in all of us,” said Larry Minnix, President and CEO of LeadingAge and chairman of the Listening Post Project Steering Committee. “It is time for a not-for-profit spirit of renewal in our country where the sector reclaims its strengths, recommits to its unique responsibilities for the public good, and society recognizes the sector’s enduring contributions in improving the quality of our lives. This Listening Post Project report on these values summarizes in new and fresh ways why and how the sector’s mission is so important.”

The full text of the report “**What do Nonprofits Stand For? Renewing the nonprofit value commitment,**” by Lester M. Salamon, Stephanie L. Geller, and Chelsea I. Newhouse, is available here: [bit.ly/npvalues](http://bit.ly/npvalues).

With this launch, the Center and the Listening Post partners hope to begin a broad conversation about these values, and how nonprofits can better communicate them to their supporters, funders, and stakeholders, and to assemble concrete examples of how nonprofits embody these values in their work.



## ABOUT THE JOHNS HOPKINS LISTENING POST PROJECT

The Listening Post Project is a collaborative undertaking of the Center for Civil Society Studies at the Johns Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies, the Alliance for Children and Families, the Alliance for Nonprofit Management, the American Alliance of Museums, the Arc, Community Action Partnership, LeadingAge, the League of American Orchestras, Lutheran Services in America, Michigan Nonprofit Association, the National Council of Nonprofits, and United Neighborhood Centers of America. Its goal is to monitor the health of the nation’s nonprofit organizations and assess how nonprofits are responding to important economic and policy changes. For full details on the respondents to the present survey, see [ccss.jhu.edu](http://ccss.jhu.edu). Support for the Listening Post Project has been provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the Surdna Foundation.

## ABOUT THE JOHNS HOPKINS CENTER FOR CIVIL SOCIETY STUDIES

The [Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies \(ccss.jhu.edu\)](http://ccss.jhu.edu) at the Johns Hopkins Institute for Health and Social Policy 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. Follow the Center on Twitter ([@JHUCCSS](https://twitter.com/JHUCCSS)) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/JHUCCSS).