

## CONSIDER INTERNING AT A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

### Just what is a Non-Profit, Anyway?

In a nutshell:

- Non-profit corporations are developed to help people achieve a common purpose. Our nation has a long tradition of people coming together and forming organizations to solve problems and enrich their communities.
- Non-profit and charitable organizations play a vital role in the economic and social well-being of our communities, states and nation. They provide a means for people to contribute time, resources, and expertise for a greater good.
- Non-profits are mostly defined by federal and state law by what they do, or cannot do. On the state level, the term "non-profit" is used to describe corporations that are organized to advance a public or community interest rather than for individual personal or financial gain.
- Non-profits may not distribute earnings or pay dividends: any surplus must be used to further the corporation's organizational purpose.
- Non-profits are permitted to hire paid staff to conduct their organization's activities.

### Types of Non-Profit Organizations

What follows is a description of a few of the most common types of Non-Profit Organizations you can consider when searching for an internship. All of them are accurately described as "non-profit," but there are critical differences among them:

**1. Charitable Organization or Charity-** This is the category people think of most often when they are referring to a non-profit. Groups organized and operated for one or more of the following purposes: charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, fostering national or international amateur sports competition, or the prevention of cruelty to children or animals.

Examples: Day care centers, colleges, environmental groups, food banks, low-income housing organizations, mental health organizations, museums, and theatre groups. These organizations are further divided into two categories, "public charities" or "private foundations."

- **Public charities-** organizations that can demonstrate that a certain part of their support comes from the general public or a unit of government; or organizations formed to raise money for a specific school, hospital, governmental unit or publicly supported charity.
- **Private foundations-** organizations that distribute money to fulfill a public purpose. Foundations are subject to different laws and regulations than public charities.

**2. Civic Leagues and Social Welfare Organizations-** Organizations that are created to further the common good and general welfare of the people of the community.

Examples: civic groups, downtown improvement associations, and social action organizations.

**3. Trade and Professional Associations-** Business leagues and trade associations

Examples: retail merchants, associations, and real estate boards

**4. Social and Recreational Clubs-** Social and recreational clubs are organized primarily for recreation or pleasure and not for profit. Social clubs may not discriminate against any person on the basis of race or color.

Examples: hobby clubs, country clubs, garden and variety clubs, amateur hunting, fishing or other sport clubs and similar groups

**For more information about NJ non-profit organizations go to:** <http://www.njnonprofits.org>