



+
Nonprofit.ist

2025

Consultant Cost & Compensation SURVEY

Brought to you by *THE NONPROFIT TIMES*



Contents

PLAN FOR TODAY

- Digging Into the Data
- Using the Dashboard to Go Deeper
- Next Year's Survey
- Tools for Supporting Your Business



Introduction

Welcome to the 2025 Nonprofit Consultant Salary Survey Report.

- This year, **300+ consultants** shared details about their rates, services, business models, and backgrounds. The findings offer a clear snapshot of how consultants work and what they earn across the sector.
- This report reflects self-reported data and should be viewed as **directional, not definitive**, but the trends offer valuable insight for current consultants, nonprofit leaders, and those exploring consulting as a career.

Huge thanks to everyone who participated.

Your input helps build transparency across the sector.



Digging into the Data



This Year's Survey

307

Participants

39

States

7

Countries

- Survey was open from **July to September 2025** and was shared through Nonprofit.ist newsletters, emails, partners, and social media.
- Entering its fifth year, with Nonprofit.ist building on Do Better Consulting's foundation
- Largest and longest running survey of its kind



Income Rates

Overall Average Rate (Hourly)

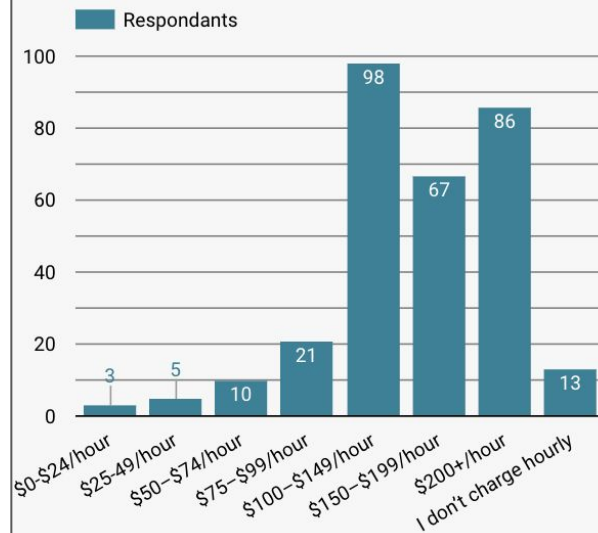


How much do nonprofit consultants earn? What do they charge hourly?

- **2025 Average: ~\$159/hour**

2025	~\$159
2024	~\$151
2022	~\$141
2021	~\$132
2020	~\$110

What do you estimate as your AVERAGE hourly rate in 2024 for client billable work only?



Total Take-Home Compensation (Annually)

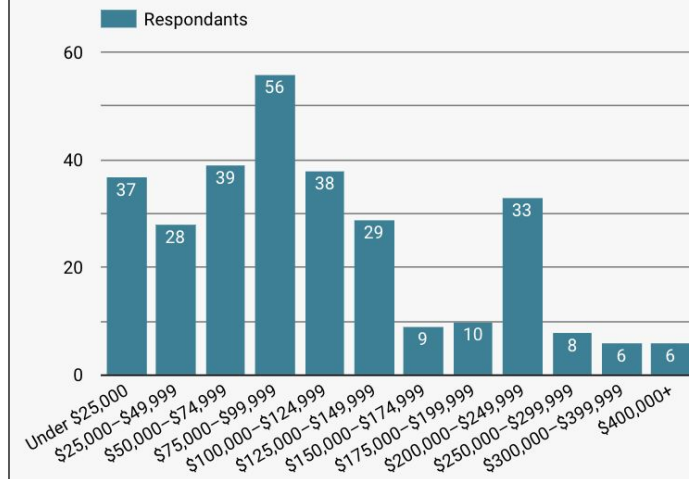


What are consultants charging annually?

- **Average: \$124,000**

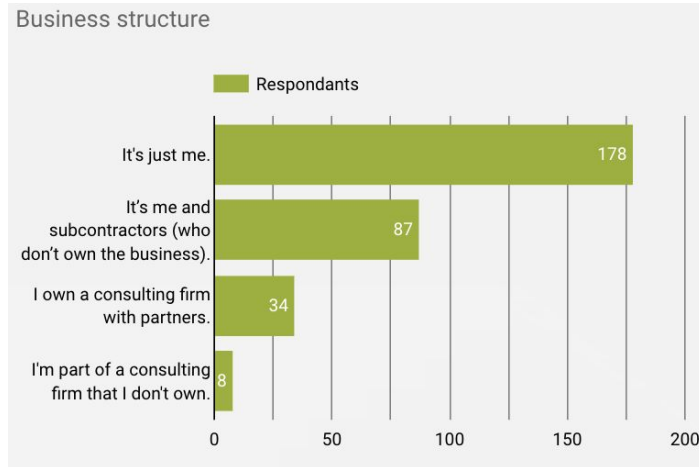
2025	~\$124K
2024	~\$102K
2022	~\$102K
2021	~\$105K
2020	~\$51K

What was your total take-home compensation from consulting in 2024?



Business Structures Impact on Rate & Annual Income

Business Structure	Average Hourly Rate	Average Annual Billing
It's just me	~\$151/hour	~\$97,000
Me + Subcontractors	~\$191/hour	~\$161,000
Own a consulting firm with partners	~\$233/hour	~\$188,000



Business Structures



Billable Hours

- Most consultants cluster around **20–24 billable hours per week**
- Most consultants spend between **5–14 hours/week on non-client tasks**, reinforcing the need for strong operational systems.

Fee Structures

- **Project-Based/Flat Fee** structures are the most preferred followed by **Retainer** then **Hourly Rates**.

Top Business Expenses

1. **Software /Tools/ Subscription**
2. **Professional Services (legal, accounting, etc.)**
3. **Insurance**
4. **Education/Training**

Trends in the Consulting Market?

The nonprofit consulting market is experiencing:

- Rising rates year over year
- A shift toward mid-to-high hourly tiers
- Strong demand for specialized or senior consultants
- Decreasing prevalence of low-fee consulting

Education & Experience



Consultant Rates Based on Experience

Experience	Avg. Hourly Rate	Avg. Annual Billing
0-5 years	~\$155/hour	~\$165,000
6-14 years	~\$158/hour	~\$134,000
15-19 years	~\$160/hour	~\$100,600
20+ years	~\$160/hour	~\$143,000

Average Hourly Rate by Education YoY

	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate
2025	\$156/hour	\$149/hour	\$140/hour
2024	\$110/hour	\$140/hour	\$175/hour
2022	\$134/hour	\$140/hour	\$175/hour
2021	\$114/hour	\$139/hour	\$126/hour
2020	\$105/hour	\$113/hour	\$101/hour

Service Types & Rates | Highest Service Type

Highest service type	Avg. Hourly Rate	Avg. Annual Billing
1. Fundraising	~\$154/hour	~\$114,000
2. Strategic Planning	~\$178/hour	~\$119,500
3. Org Development	~\$160/hour	~\$98,000
4. Grant Writing/Strategy	~\$146/hour	~\$101,000

- **Fundraising & Strategic Planning** were the most offered service (both at 18%) followed by **Organizational Development & Grant Strategy/Writing**
- Strategic Planning has the highest hourly rate at **~\$178/hr.**
- Technology services had the highest total take-home compensation at **~\$157,000**



Service Types And Rates | Highest Service Type

Top Specializations by Hourly Rates Over the Years

2025

1. Fundraising
2. Strategic Planning
3. Organizational Development
4. Grant Writing / Strategy
5. Marketing & Communications

2024

1. Strategic Planning
2. Executive Coaching
3. Facilitation
4. Fundraising, Marketing & Comms
5. AI / Technology Services

2022

1. Strategic Planning
2. Facilitation
3. Fundraising
4. Grant Writing
5. Executive Coaching



Demographics

Gender & Pay



Male Consultants

- ~\$155/hour
- ~\$157K



Female Consultants

- ~\$150/hour
- ~\$110K



Nonbinary & Queer Consultants

- ~\$149/hour
- ~\$85K

	Male	Female	Nonbinary
2025	~\$155/hour	~\$150/hr	~\$149/hr
2024	~\$170/hr	~\$149/hr	~\$171/hr
2022	~\$159/hour	~\$140/hour	~\$108/hour
2021	~\$154/hour	~\$126/hour	—

Race & Pay



	White	Black/African American	Asian	Hispanic/Latino
Hourly Average	~\$160/hr	~\$143/hr	~\$157/hr	~\$151/hr
Avg. Annual Billing	~\$117K	~\$103K	~\$96K	~\$132K

Geographic Variations



United States



U.S. – Hourly	~\$161/hr
U.S. – Annual	~\$118K

Suburban



Hourly Rate	~\$164/hr
Annual Earnings	~\$121K

Urban



Hourly Rate	~\$152/hr
Annual Earnings	~\$129K

Rural



Hourly Rate	~\$157/hr
Annual Earnings	~\$105K



Using the Dashboard to Go Deeper



Nonprofit.is
Connect with Nonprofit Experts

Consultant Cost & Compensation Survey 2025

Your Business Structure

Main services provided

US Located

How long have you been a consultant?

How long have you been in Non Profit Area

Education

Racial Identity

Sexual Identity

Gender Identity

Living Enviroment



Overview



Audience



Education & Experience



Structure of Work



Fees & Compensation



Majority
Woman

Hourly Rate (Billable 2024)
\$100-\$149/hour

Total Compensation Range 2024
\$75,000-\$99,999

US Located
286



Survey Responses
307

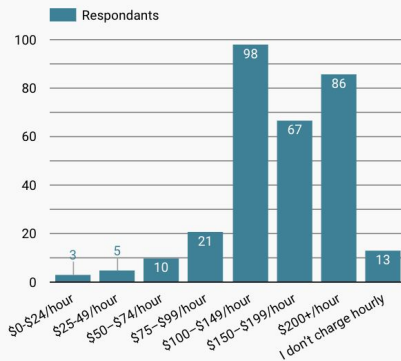
Sections
11

Questions
52

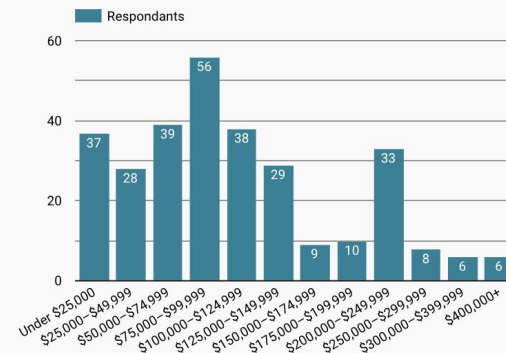


Jul 07 - Oct 02

AVERAGE hourly rate in 2024



Total take-home compensation from consulting in 2024





Next Year's Survey

Timeline



JULY 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

July 2026
Survey
Opens

AUGUST 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

August 2026
Survey
Closes

SEPTEMBER 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4

**September–
October 2026**
Data Analysis

DECEMBER 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3

December 2026
Report
Release

Predictions for 2026

- **AI Driven Delivery Becomes the Norm and Raises Expectations**
 - *As AI becomes the norm, clients will expect quicker, smarter work. Consultants who use AI tools for reporting, writing, and data cleanup will be able to raise their rates and differentiate themselves.*
- **Rates Rise ... but Mostly for Specialized Skills**
 - *Hourly rates will continue to increase. The demand for specialized skills will increase while generalists may face rate stagnation as competition increases*
- **Nonprofits Push for More “Proof of Impact” From Consultants**
 - *Consultants who cannot quantify their value will struggle to retain long-term contracts*



Predictions for 2026 Continued

- **Thought Leadership Will Matter More Than Ever**
 - *As competition grows, consultants who strengthen their personal brand through regular LinkedIn content, thought-leadership newsletters, and meaningful community contributions will be best positioned to stand out.*
- **Talent Migration: Corporate → Nonprofit Consulting**
 - *Professionals exiting/impacted by corporate or government layoffs may continue to move into the freelancing world. This may increase competition but also raises nonprofit consulting quality and sophistication.*



2026 will favor nonprofit consultants who can:

- Combine Strategy + Execution
- Implement AI + data-driven systems
- Demonstrate measurable ROI
- Build strong personal thought leadership
- Provide flexible, fractional support
- Offer specialized expertise rather than general services

The biggest shift:

AI will not replace nonprofit consultants – but consultants who know how to **effectively use AI to expand knowledge/capacity** will replace those who don't



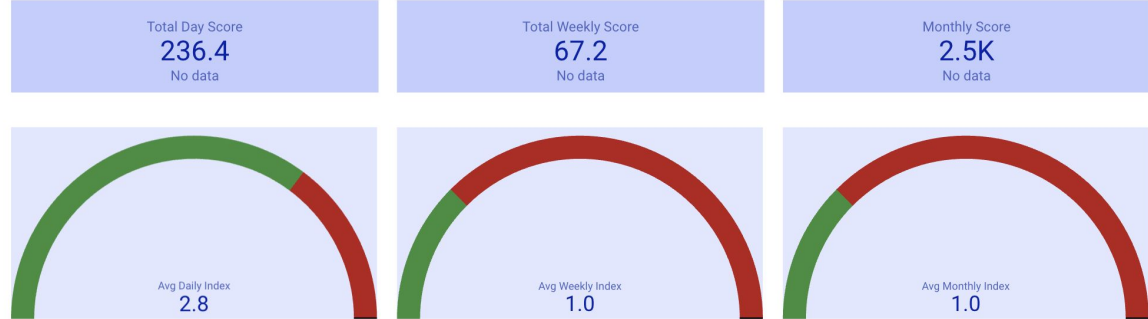


Tools for Supporting Your Business



Nonprofit Wellness Index

- nonprofitlist.com/nonprofitwellnessindex
- Tracking the health of the entire nonprofit sector in real-time. Like a Nonprofit Consumer Sentiment, analyzing job activity and spending patterns. Powered by Whole Whale.



Scroll down for more Tier details

Score Range	Status	Interpretation
1.00 - 1.39	Crisis	Severe instability; layoffs high, hiring very low
1.40 - 1.79	Critical	Organization struggling; urgent attention needed
1.80 - 1.99	At Risk	Signs of trouble; hiring limited, layoffs concerning
2.00 - 2.39	Weak	Stable but struggling; minor growth, layoffs ongoing
2.40 - 2.79	Caution	Some recovery; hiring improving but still fragile



- nonprofit.is/pricinghelper
- Start by answering four quick questions. You'll get an immediate rate benchmark and recommendation, then choose a next step (Portfolio, Structure, or Positioning). We'll ask targeted follow-ups and deliver a tailored 30-day action plan.

Pricing Helper

Hi! How can I help you?

Guest: What's the average pricing rate for consultants with 3 years of experience?

That's an excellent question. The average rate for a consultant with 3 years of experience can vary significantly based on a few key factors.

To give you the most accurate and actionable benchmark, I just need to ask four quick questions about your practice.

1. **What is your current business structure?** (e.g., Side-hustle/Freelancer, Sole Proprietor, Small Firm/Agency)
2. **What is your primary service offering?** (e.g., Fundraising, Strategic Planning, Grant Writing, Marketing, Board Development)
3. **What is your current hourly rate?** (If you use project rates, what would be the approximate hourly equivalent?)
4. **Just to confirm, how many years of *nonprofit consulting* experience do you have?**

Once I have this, I can provide an immediate rate analysis against industry benchmarks and suggest personalized next steps for growing your revenue.

Guest: 1. Side-hustle/Freelancer

2. Marketing
3. \$27/hour
4. 3 years of experience

Thank you for providing that information. Based on your details, here is an immediate analysis of your pricing and your personalized next steps.

1. Initial Rate Analysis

Your current rate of **\$27/hour** is significantly below established industry benchmarks for nonprofit marketing consultants. This presents a major opportunity for revenue growth.



Proposal GPT

CauseWriter.ai: What is your company?



start typing and we'll get to it!

Send

Built by CauseWriter.ai | All chats private

- nonprofit.ist/proposalgpt
- Provide your consultant profile, detailing your services. Submit the core project documents. The system will then analyze these materials to extract and itemize the client's specific needs, deliverables, and success metrics. The tool will generate a comprehensive proposal outline and then draft each section sequentially, ensuring every part directly addresses the client's pain points while weaving in critical nonprofit elements like mission alignment, impact measurement, and sustainability.



Thank You!