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HOTLINE

Answering Readers' Questions About Writing Speeches for Charity Leaders, Fund-Raising Job Titles, and More

By Alison Stein Wellner

The *Chronicle's* Philanthropy Careers asks its readers to submit questions about job hunting, recruitment, and management challenges in the nonprofit world. In our monthly advice column, we respond to some of your inquiries with tips about resources and wisdom from experts in the field.

Q. I am a U.K. citizen who would very much like to find a job in the United States in fund raising, as I believe I have the skills, knowledge, and experience to be an asset to an organization. How willing are U.S. employers to hire from outside the country?

A. American employers may be very willing to hire a fund raiser from another country -- if the position is right. "A candidate from abroad may be especially well suited to a U.S.-based nonprofit with an international mission," suggests Alexa Cortes Culwell, chief executive officer of the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation in San Mateo, Calif.

However, the more the position depends on your network of contacts, as many fund-raising positions do, the more difficulty you will have in convincing an employer that they would be better off hiring you over a qualified domestic fund raiser with a bursting Rolodex. This is often the priority of larger organizations, which seek candidates who have not only extensive experience but also many contacts in a variety of social and economic arenas, says Chuck Pappalardo, managing director of Trilogy Venture Search, an executive search company in Burlingame, Calif., that works with nonprofit clients. "If you have the experience but not the contacts, you may want to initially contact smaller nonprofits," he suggests.

Smaller charities may find you, with your experience and proven track record, more alluring than a local, inexperienced candidate, says Ms. Cortes Culwell. Just keep in mind that in this post-September 11 era, it's not easy to arrange for a work visa, and much of the responsibility for arranging for that visa falls on your potential employer. This means that you may find that your case is a difficult one to make to a smaller charity, which may lack the time and staff resources to handle your visa application. You can learn more about what's involved in obtaining a visa here.

Got a question about job hunting, recruiting, or managing in the nonprofit world? Send it to us at hotline@philanthropy.com.

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