

Mind the Gap - Nonprofits in Oregon

Lesson Overview:

The gap between what people can afford to buy in the market and what governments provide is enormous. Nonprofits serve an important role in filling that gap. This lesson introduces students to the role of nonprofits and asks them to focus locally, investigating what organizations exist in their community and why.

Duration of the Lesson:

60 - 90 minutes

Materials List:

- Student copies (digital or paper) of Nonprofit Profile worksheet

Oregon Standards

Transformative Social Emotional Learning

Standard 3: Develop social awareness that fosters a sense of belonging and leads to co-constructing equitable, thriving communities and a vibrant society.

Social Studies

Essential Understandings

X. Apply the practices and knowledge of social science to determine the most effective ways to take informed civic action.

Standards

3.C.IR.5 Describe the responsibilities of people in their community and state.

4.EF.ES.3 Describe examples of government-provided goods and services funded with taxes.

5.E.MI.4 Describe why the government collects taxes and what goods and services it provides society.

8.C.DP.11 Analyze issues involving liberty in conflict with equality or authority, individual rights in conflict with the common good, or majority rule in conflict with minority rights.

HS.C.PI.3 Examine and compare institutions, functions, and processes of government.

HS.C.DP.14 Identify and analyze the existence and perpetuation of discrimination and inequity in the local, state, national, or context.

HS.C.IR.9 Describe the civic behaviors that promote and strengthen a pluralistic democracy.

HS.E.ST.14 Summarize the role and effect of economic institutions within market economies. Examples: Labor unions, multinationals, nonprofit organizations

HS.E.MI.4 Explain and give examples of the roles the government may play in a market economy.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to... (SWBAT)

- Describe the role of a nonprofit organization in their community and evaluate its social contribution.

Essential Questions:

- What economic needs do nonprofits address that markets or governments don't?
- What organizations help those in need in our communities?
- What charity would you give your time, talent, and treasure to?

Procedure:

Time	Activity
10 min	<p>Ask students to guess what the word philanthropy means and tell their guesses to the students in their table groups.</p> <p>Show this short film: Philanthropy and Service-Learning: Why do they matter? Learning to Give. Ask them to clarify the definition of philanthropy.</p> <p>Then play this quick audio story: Portland high schoolers raise money, awareness for youth aging out of foster care system, OPB, April 12, 2025</p>
5 minutes	<p>Quickwrite - Have students write about any experiences they have had either receiving or giving of their time, talent or treasure. Tell them there is no need to share out as this may be quite personal for people.</p>
10 minutes	<p>Direct students to the CLP Current Event Oregonians Helping Oregonians. Have them read the narrative introduction and browse the headlines to get a feel for what is going on right now regarding nonprofits. Encourage them to click on a couple links that look interesting to them or are relevant to your part of Oregon and read.</p>
10 minutes	<p>Display for your class the definition of a nonprofit organization: <u>an organization whose aim is to make money for a social or political purpose or to provide a service that people need, rather than to make a profit.</u></p> <p>As a group, brainstorm any nonprofits students have heard of that help people in their community. Once you have generated a list, discuss why these nonprofits exist.</p> <p>Prompt the discussion by asking questions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do those organizations provide? • Why don't people just pay for what they need? • What challenges might they be facing? • Why isn't the government giving everyone what they need? • How are government programs paid for?
5 minutes	<p>Project your screen and navigate to the Nonprofit Association of Oregon's directory: https://nonprofitoregon.org/member-directory/</p> <p>Show your students how to filter by their city or county and then by focus area to find a</p>

	<p>nonprofit to investigate.</p> <p>Explain that they should work in pairs to learn about a nonprofit working in their area and fill out the Nonprofit Profile handout attached. They should pick an organization that has a substantial website with up to date information. You may want to keep a list on the board to ensure students pick different organizations from each other.</p>
10 min	Give pairs time to explore the organization's website and fill out the Nonprofit Profile.
Varies, depending on class size	<p>Have students share out the following to the whole class regarding the nonprofit they profiled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this organization benefit our community? • Did you feel that this organization is worth giving of your own time, talent or treasure, or would you want to find a different organization? • If this organization were to lose all its funding and disappear, how might our community respond?

Assessment(s):

- Nonprofit Profile worksheet
- Oral sharing of findings and reactions

Modifications/Variations:

- If your students demonstrate enthusiasm, you may consider introducing them to student grantmaking programs like Community 101 or Schnitzer Cares. Show them which Oregon schools already participate. Interested students could pursue this as a club if you don't have enough engagement to do it as a class.
 - [Teens Building a Better Community](#), Schnitzer Cares
 - [Student Community Engagement Through Grantmaking and Volunteerism](#), Community 101, OCF

Lesson Recommendations:

- Maybe your school is already a Community 101 or Schnitzer Cares school. If that's the case, bring in students who participated to talk about their experience.
- Perhaps your school's staff and faculty have nonprofits they volunteer with or donate to. They could generate a list for students to explore.

Nonprofit Profile

YOUR RESEARCH

Chosen Nonprofit:

Logo:	Slogan:	Mission statement:
Who does the organization serve?	How does it do its work?	Where does this take place?
How are they funded?	# of employees:	Is there a Board of Directors?
What impact has the organization had?	Has there been news coverage of their work?	How long has the organization been doing this work?

YOUR ANALYSIS

How does this organization benefit our community?

Did you feel that this organization is worth giving of your own time, talent or treasure, or would you want to find a different organization? Explain.

If this organization were to lose all its funding and disappear, how might our community respond?

Do you think government should assume this role? Why or why not?