

On The Rise: A Profile of Women of Color in Leadership

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November 2002

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We would like to thank all the women executive directors of color who responded to our survey and shared their information with us. The development of this WEDOC network is a shared effort, and we hope that the information in this report helps to build this group.

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by Anushka Fernandopulle, Jan Masaoka, and Pardis Parsa
CompassPoint Nonprofit Services
September 2002

Executive summary

From a sample of 125 women executive directors of color (WEDOC) identified in the San Francisco Bay Area, this study reports on a written survey of 49 of these leaders. In addition, the report draws on in-depth interviews and CompassPoint's experiences with convening lunches for women executive directors of color. Findings are also compared to a national sample of executive directors from a study in 2001.¹

The study suggests that women of color increasingly hold executive positions in nonprofits of all types and sizes, including mainstream organizations. However, women executives may need to be better qualified than their male or white counterparts: in contrast to the general sample, these executives are better educated, have longer nonprofit experience, are more likely to have government or for-profit management experience and interestingly, are more likely to have been hired from within.

Executives in the sample lead organizations of considerable diversity: health and human service organizations along with arts, education and conservation nonprofits; organizations with staff sizes ranging from 1 to 575 people.

Nonetheless, a profile of a composite woman executive director of color would show her to be a first-time executive director, on the job almost four years, and running an organization with a budget of between \$1 million and \$5 million with a median of 12 staff. This organization is a health or human service organization serving primarily people of color, and approximately half the staff and half the board members are women of color. She has a master's degree, has been in the nonprofit sector 14 years, and has one year of management experience in a for-profit company. She is between 40 and 49 years old, married, and has two grown children. There is a significant possibility that she is an immigrant (24%). She values her ability to connect with constituents served by her organization as well as advantages that may accrue in the mainstream from being a rarity. At the same time, she lacks access to people in power, and often has to work against stereotypes related to her race, ethnicity, gender, or age. She looks

¹ *Daring to Lead: Nonprofit Executive Directors and Their Work Experience*, by Timothy Wolfred, Jeanne Peters, et.al, CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, 2001.

forward to being active in a network of women executive directors of color, and wants to see the network develop an advocacy agenda for working with government and philanthropy.

Demographics

- Respondents were Asian Pacific Islander (49%), African American (19%), Latina (15%), South Asian (10%), Native American (4%) and other.
- Respondents are well educated, with 78% having obtained graduate degrees.
- A surprising 24% are immigrants to the U.S., with most immigrating during their childhood.
- Fifty-seven percent (57%) of women in the study have children, although most of the children are 18 years old or older.

Work experience

- Seventy-seven percent (77%) of women executive directors of color are on their first jobs as executive directors, compared with a general sample where 65% were first-time EDs.
- WEDOCs are relatively new on their jobs, with 42% in their current jobs for two years or less; a general sample showed 25% with the same tenure.
- Women of color are more likely to be hired from within than EDs overall, with 43% and 36% respectively hired from within.
- The median length of nonprofit service for the group is 14.5 years, and they are more likely to have experience in government (35%) and for-profit companies (52%) than the overall ED population (15% and 35% respectively).

Organizations led

- WEDOCs head organizations that range from 0.5 to 575 employees, with a median of 12 staff.
- Their organizations are most likely to have annual budgets between \$1 million and \$4.9 million (32%).
- The most common fields for WEDOC-led organizations are human services (27%), education (22%), and health/mental health (18%).
- WEDOCs work in organizations with high percentages of women of color on staff: the median percentage is a remarkable 62%; even in organizations with budgets of \$5 million or higher, the median is 69%.
- WEDOC-led organizations have a median of 44% of board members who are women of color. As in the above finding, it is not possible to tell whether organizations with women of color are more likely to hire a woman of color, whether these executives have contributed to recruiting women of color on the staff and board, or whether the mission of the organization is one that draws women of color to positions on staff, board, and executive leadership.

Positive aspects of being a woman executive director of color

- Respondents commented frequently on their ability to connect with constituents and partners in communities of color.
- As rarities, WEDOCs stand out and are easily remembered by others in the mainstream.
- WEDOCs value a perceived ability to manage differently than men.
- WEDOCs are aware that they serve as mentors to other women of color and cite this opportunity as a positive aspect of their role.

Challenging aspects of being a woman executive director of color

- The most common challenge cited was a perceived lack of connections with mainstream leadership and prospective donors.
- Women executive directors of color struggle against stereotypes, from outside as well as within their own communities.
- A large percentage of WEDOCs expressed concern over balancing work and personal life.

Interest in a WEDOC network

- There was very high interest in suggested network activities, with the most enthusiastic responses to events with community leaders, a one-day conference, and the development of an advocacy agenda.
- Action-related activities such as those above were consistently rated higher than support-related activities such as affinity or support groups, skills-building workshops, or having a mentor.

This study represents a unique and first step towards identifying and better understanding this important group of leaders. Women executive directors are shown to be in leadership positions with the ability to be initiators and drivers of social change. We hope that this study sparks additional research, and that the activities sparked by this study will be the beginning of an important movement.

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I. Introduction

A few years ago, CompassPoint Nonprofit Services convened an informal lunch for women executive directors of color in San Francisco as part of a series of themed lunches for executive directors. This first WEDOC (pronounced Wee-Dock) lunch, co-hosted by Irma Herrera of Equal Rights Advocates and Jan Masaoka of CompassPoint, generated a great deal of excitement, both from those who were able to attend and even those who could not. Because of this enthusiasm, several other lunches were subsequently held for women executive directors of color, publicized through CompassPoint's workshop catalog and by word of mouth. The lunches were generally held at CompassPoint's San Francisco office, although Janice Mirikitani also hosted one at Glide Memorial Church.

From the start, there has been an extraordinarily strong response from those who attended one or more lunches, as well as extraordinary response to the idea of the series. For example, at each lunch, one or more participants have spontaneously brought gifts for the other attendees. Each lunch, several people who could not attend have phoned or emailed CompassPoint asking us to be sure to include them in a special mailing for upcoming sessions.

To some extent, these informal gatherings have suffered from their own success. At two of the lunches, there were simply too many people—30 to 40—to have a meaningful discussion. In addition, when specifically discussing what the group might want, there has been more agreement about what we *don't* want than what we do. And while there were some ideas about what the group would like to do going forward, given how busy everyone in the group is, there have not been enough resources to move the project forward.

With this in mind, CompassPoint Nonprofit Services sought funding to do a more systematic survey of women executive directors of color. Our goal was to understand the group better and how a network might best serve WEDOCs, in order to create the foundation for a strong and vibrant WEDOC network.

II. Methodology

With funding from the Levi Strauss Foundation, CompassPoint began by compiling lists of names of women executive directors of color. Beginning with attendees from WEDOC lunches, a snowball effort resulted quickly in a list of 125. [One measure of enthusiasm for the effort was the number of people who sent in information or rumors of WEDOCs for CompassPoint to try to track down, and the number of inquiries from women of color in nonprofits who wanted further information after hearing about the project.]

Based on preliminary interviews, a written survey was developed and was conducted through an online survey tool as well as by fax. Forty-nine responses were received in a few weeks, a

39% response. Information was gathered anonymously to encourage respondents to answer freely.

One reason why the WEDOC data is compelling is that it can be compared with a similar sample of 231 Bay Area executive directors of all types gathered for a 2001 CompassPoint study, *Daring to Lead*. The demographics of this general sample was primarily female (64.9%) and primarily European/white (76.5%). Some of the questions in the WEDOC survey were modeled on questions in *Daring to Lead*, so the results can be compared with the results from this broader population. In this report, the sample from *Daring to Lead* will be referred to as “the general population.”

Because personal concerns—such as balancing work with family life—emerged as a major concern in the preliminary interviews, a number of questions related to life outside of work were included. Respondents could choose to leave these blank, but nearly all completed them.

Participants in this study do not represent a random sample, and undoubtedly reflect some of the unique characteristics of the San Francisco Bay Area. This study does not propose to be definitive, but rather exploratory, raising questions and stimulating further research.

III. Key Findings

Key findings are grouped in the following categories:

- A. Who are these Women Executive Directors of Color?
- B. Tenure and Career Paths
- C. Organizational Characteristics
- D. Positive Aspects of Being a Woman Executive Director of Color
- E. Challenging Aspects
- F. The Struggle for a Work/Life Balance
- G. Interest in Network Activities

A. Who are these Women Executive Directors of Color (WEDOCs)?

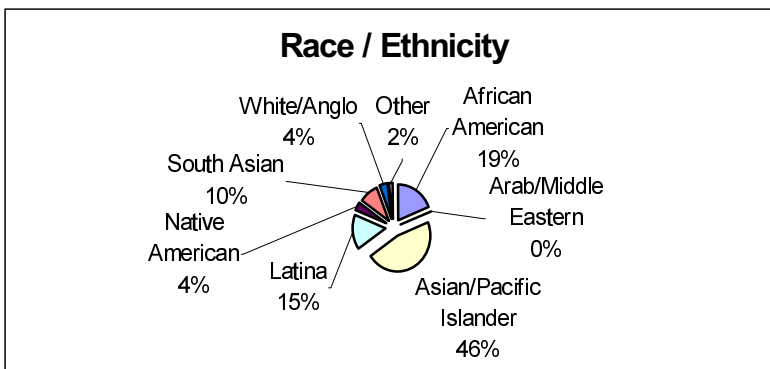
Women executive directors of color responding to the survey were primarily from San Francisco, with high educational backgrounds and a median age of 48.5 years. One quarter of the respondents are immigrants to the United States.

Geography

We received responses from 49 women executive directors of color in the Bay Area. Respondents are executive directors around the Bay Area, but primarily in San Francisco (30 responses), Oakland (9 responses) and Berkeley (4 responses), with one response each from the North Bay, Peninsula, and Other East Bay.

Race/Ethnicity

The largest race/ethnicity represented in the responses is Asian Pacific Islander (API), at 46%. Asian Pacific Islanders are the largest ethnic group in San Francisco, and about half the WEDOCs on the mailing list were API; this finding may reflect either or both of these factors. The next largest groups represented in about equal proportion are African American (19%) and Latina (15%). Respondents were allowed to



mark all that apply for ethnicity/race, so some marked more than one category. Other groups represented include South Asian, Native American, White/Anglo Caucasian, and Other.

Age

WEDOCs who responded represent a wide age range, from 24 to 65 years old. About 70% of the respondents are between 40 and 59 years old, similar to the general population of Bay Area executive directors. However, the WEDOC group is younger when compared to that sample: there is a relatively larger percentage of EDs under 40 (around 28%, compared to 18%) and a relatively smaller percentage of EDs over 60 (2% compared to 12%). The median age of the WEDOC group, 48.5 years old is only slightly higher than the median age in the general population, 45 years old.

Age		
Age	%	Cumulative %
20 – 24	2%	2%
25 – 29	9%	11%
30 – 34	11%	22%
35 – 39	7%	29%
40 – 44	15%	44%
45 – 49	9%	53%
50 – 54	33%	86%
55 – 59	13%	98%
60 +	2%	100%

Younger and older WEDOCs appear to have different experiences. In the qualitative section of the survey, several respondents discussed the impact of age:

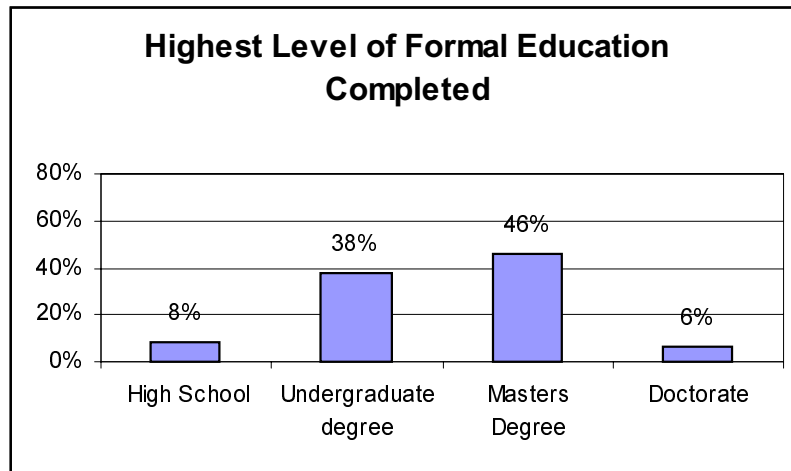
As an elder I am treated with respect.

Being younger means working harder to gain respect - even more so in the Asian and Chinese communities.

Younger women have very different attitudes than my generation about authority, careers, etc., so there are challenges all around.

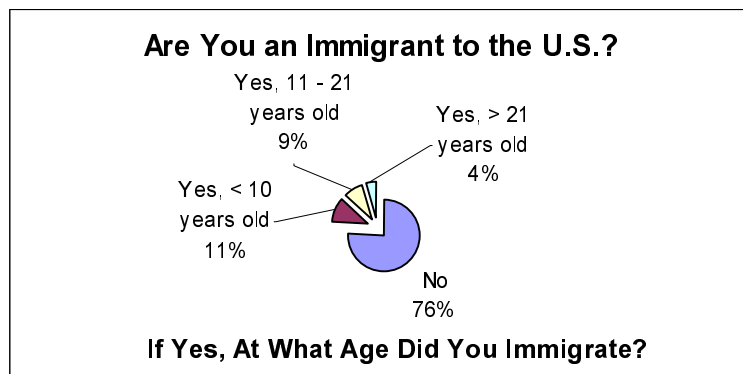
Educational Levels

The high educational levels of WEDOCs in the Bay Area matches the education level of executive directors in the *Daring to Lead* sample almost exactly. Over one-third of WEDOCs note their highest educational achievement as a Bachelor's degree, almost one half have a Master's degree, and nearly equal numbers mark a Doctorate as their highest educational level as mark a high school diploma (8.3%).

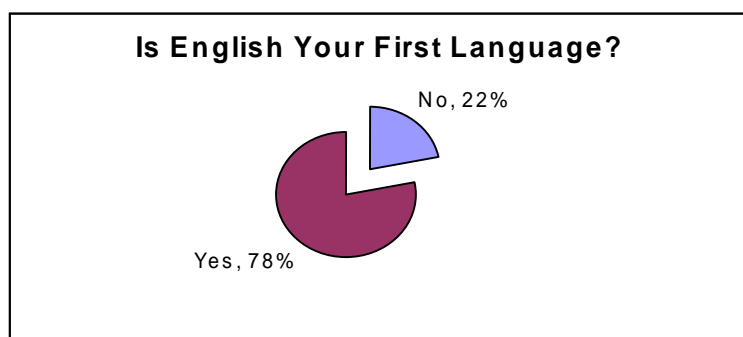


Immigration and Language History

A significant proportion of the sample WEDOCs are immigrants to the United States—one quarter of the respondents. Most immigrated early in their lives.



About 20% of the women responding to the survey report that English is their second language. Of those listing a first language other than English, the most frequent responses were Cantonese/Chinese, Spanish, and Hindi/Urdu.

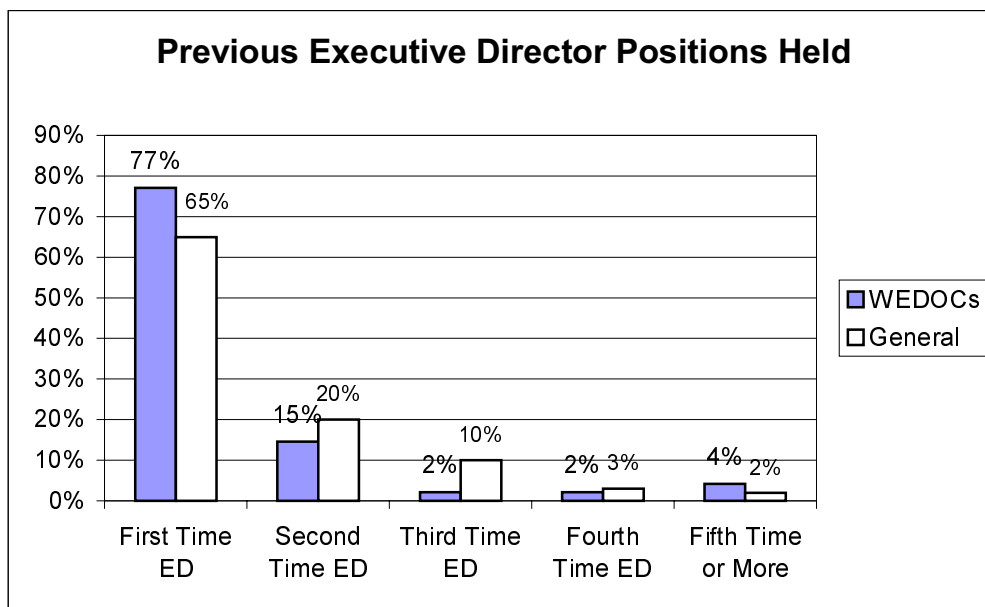


B. Tenure and Career Paths

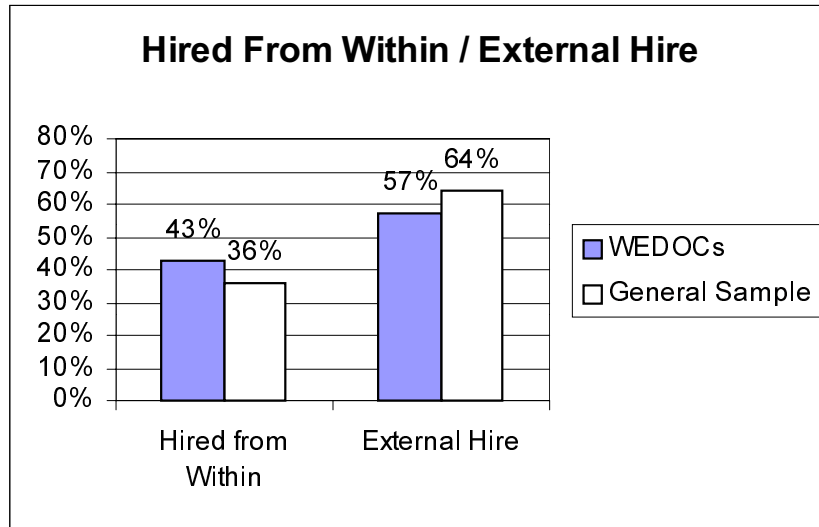
To an even stronger degree than the general population of executive directors, women executive directors of color are likely to be first-time executive directors, and are relatively new to their jobs. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of the respondents are on their first jobs as executive directors, and 42% have been on the job for two years or less. In contrast to the general population, women executive directors of color have significantly longer experience in the nonprofit sector, and a greater percentage have experience in corporate or government management.

Experience with the executive director role

A large percentage of WEDOCs are also new to this role. For 77% of WEDOCs, this is their first ED position. This is somewhat higher than the general population in *Daring to Lead* (which is 65% first-time EDs), but consistent with the finding of that study that most nonprofit EDs play the role only once.

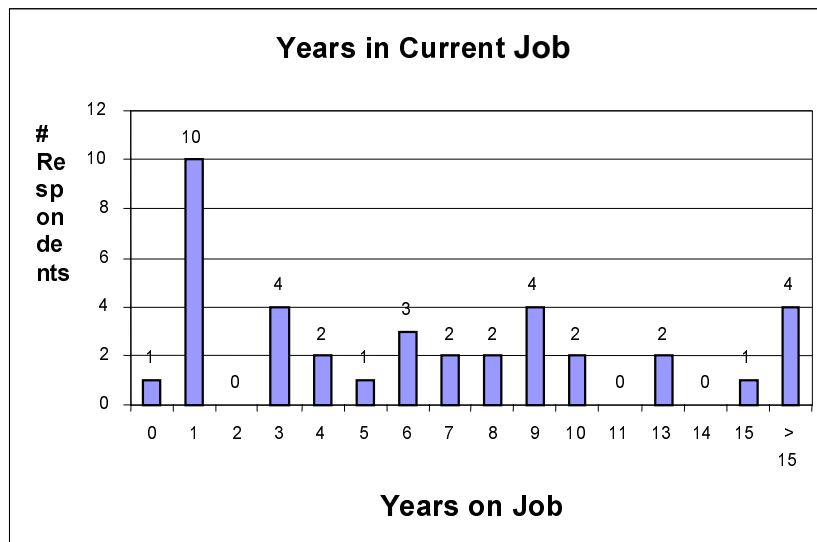


About 43% of WEDOCs worked at their current organization before becoming executive director. This is considerably higher than in the general population, where only 36% reported to have been hired from within. This may indicate that women of color are more likely to be hired for the top jobs when they are already known to the organization.



Tenure

A large proportion of WEDOCs are new to their jobs. About 42% of the group has been in their current ED role for two years or less; the median length of time for the group was 3.75 years. A minority of WEDOCs have had a long tenure: 10% have served in their role for between 10 and 25 years. The general population shows a lower percentage of EDs so new to their jobs: about 25% of the general sample of executive directors were in their jobs for 2 years or less. Shorter



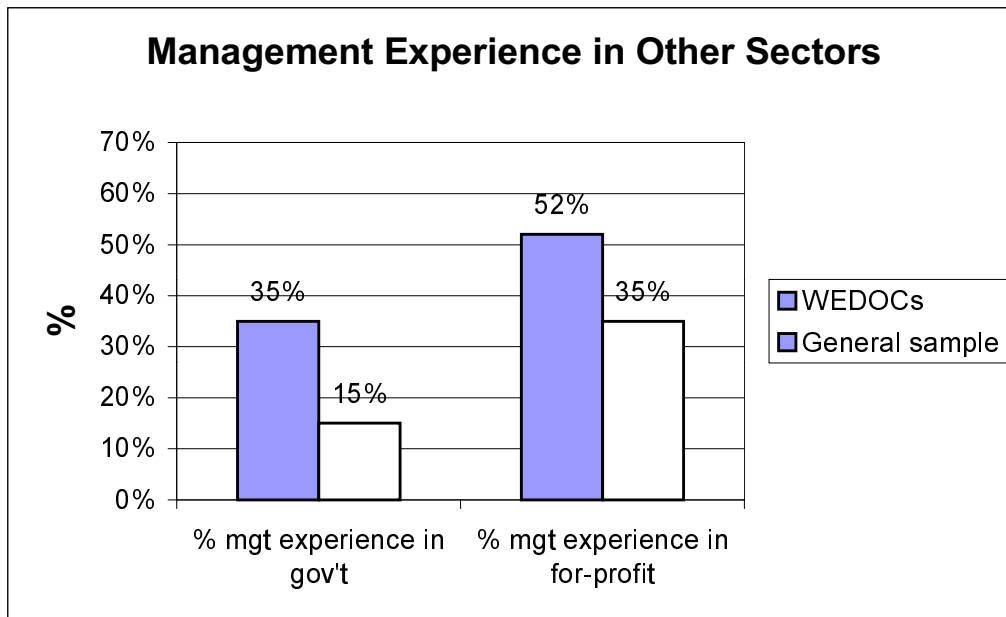
tenures in the WEDOC group may represent growth in certain types of organizations which WEDOCs lead or more opportunities for women of color in leadership in recent times.

Nonprofit sector backgrounds

Although WEDOCs have not served a long time in the ED role on average, the group has an impressive record of service in the nonprofit sector. The median length of service in the nonprofit sector is 14.5 years, with 35% of those responding having served between 20 and 35 years. Another 27% has served between 5 and 9 years, while 10% reports service of 4 years or less.

Management experience in other sectors

Consistent with this length of service to the nonprofit sector, WEDOCs have had time for relatively little management experience in other sectors. The median amount of management experience in the for-profit sector held by WEDOCs is 1 year (with 48% listing no experience); the median amount of management experience in government is 0 years, with 65% reporting no experience.



C. Organizational Characteristics

Women executive directors of color overwhelmingly (75%) lead organizations that serve people of color, that are staffed largely by people of color, and where women of color are a significant presence on the board. Their organizations maintain staff of 0.5 to 575 employees, with the median number of staff at 12.

Serving their own communities

Most women executive directors of color lead organizations which serve communities of which they are a part. When WEDOCs describe the target population of their agencies, over 75% indicate that they lead organizations whose target population is a particular minority ethnic group, people of color in general, or a particular subcategory of people of color. The remaining organizations primarily serve women, children, families, LGBT² people, or some subcategory of this group.

In comparing the leaders and their organizations, it appears that executive directors of mainstream organizations in general are newer to their jobs, and lead smaller organizations, than those leading organizations whose primary service populations are people of color. This sample may be too small to make too much of other comparative findings:

	WEDOCs of Organizations Serving Primarily People of Color	WEDOCs of Organizations Without a Specific Focus on People of Color
Hired from within	43%	45%
Tenure on current job, average	7 years	5 years
Staff size, average	52	27
% of staff that are people of color, average	62%	50%
% of board members who are women of color, average	45%	37%

² Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender

Organization size

Organizations led by WEDOCs in the survey run the spectrum of size, ranging from 0.5 employees to 575 employees. While some organizations are large (10% have 100 employees or more), the majority have smaller staffs, with 38% reporting six employees or fewer. The median number of employees of WEDOC-led organizations in this survey is 12.

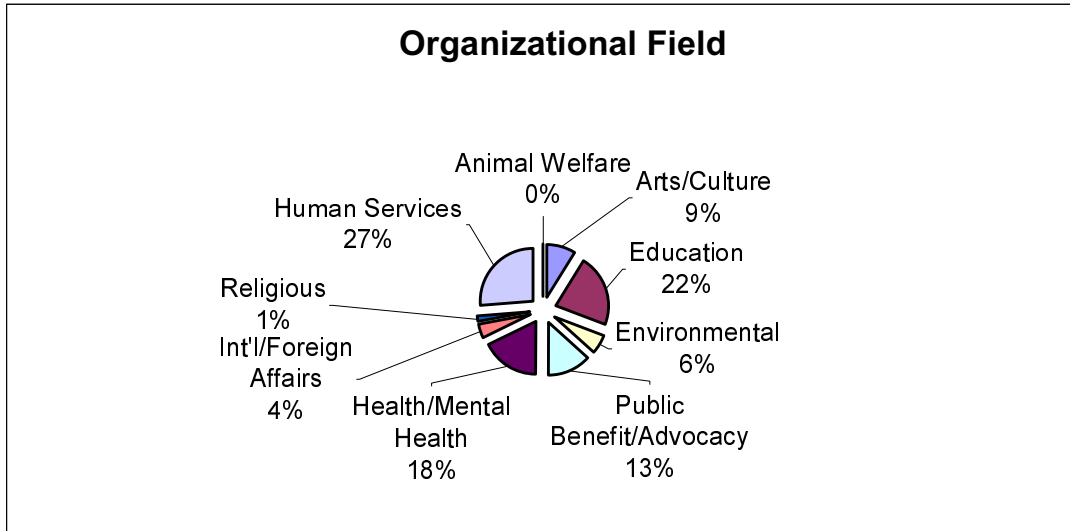
Staff Size in Organizations		
# Staff	%	Cumulative %
< 5	22%	22%
6 - 10	20%	42%
11-20	24%	67%
21 - 30	11%	78%
31 - 40	2%	80%
41 - 50	2%	82%
51 - 100	7%	89%
100 - 300	9%	98%
> 300	2%	100%

The most frequently reported groupings according to budget size were 32% of at least 1 million and less than 5 million dollars, and 25% of more than \$100,000 and less than \$500,000. The chart is roughly a normal distribution, with a dip for organizations of between \$500,000 and \$1 million.

Budget Size in Organizations		
Annual Budget	%	Cumulative %
< 100,000	6%	6%
100,001 – 499,999	26%	32%
500,000 – 999,999	17%	49%
1 million – 4.9 million	32%	81%
5 million – 9.9 million	13%	94%
10 million +	6%	100%

Organizational Field

The most frequent types of organizations reported were Education, Health/Mental Health, and Human Services, consistent with the general distribution of types of nonprofits in the Bay Area.



Staff and board composition

WEDOCs also work in organizations with high percentages of women of color staff: the median percentage of women of color staff is 62%. For the smaller organizations of six employees or fewer, this percentage increases to a remarkable median of 75% women of color on staff. But even among organizations with annual budgets of \$5 million or higher, there is a mean of 58% and a median of 69% for women of color staff.

Given the target populations of the organizations led by WEDOCs, perhaps this statistic should not be surprising. It does suggest, though, that women executive directors of color most often reach leadership positions in minority-serving organizations.

An area for further inquiry is the reasons and causes for the placement of women executive directors of color. One possible conclusion is that women of color are more able to be recognized as leaders within their own communities than in the mainstream. Another reason might be a commitment from women of color to work in organizations that serve their own communities.

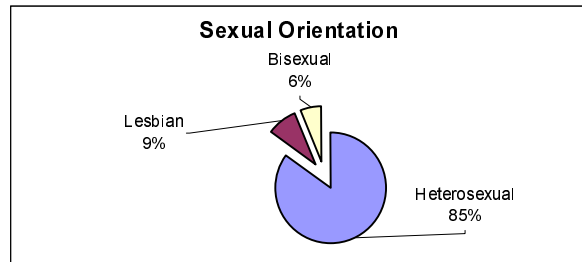
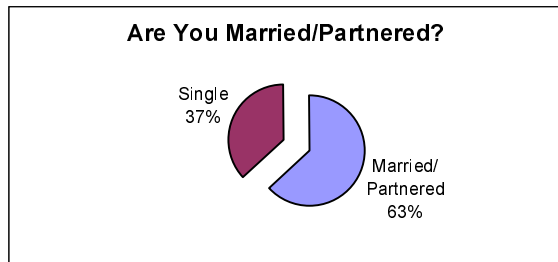
WEDOC organizations also have significant percentages of women of color on their boards, with a median of 44% of board members who are women of color. Again this increases for the smaller organizations of six employees or less to 45% and decreases to 33% for the larger organizations. It was not possible to determine from this survey whether this finding reflects a greater propensity for women of color on boards to hire another woman of color, whether a

WEDOC is more likely to seek and attract board members who are also women of color, or whether the organizations that WEDOCs lead have missions that tend to draw support from women of color as staff, board, and leadership.

D. Balancing a Life

Women executive directors of color are more likely to be married/partnered (63%) than single, and more likely to have children (57%) than not, but with children who are teenagers or older. Nearly all interviewees expressed tension between the demanding executive job and personal life.

From interviews, we found that finding a balance between a demanding executive director role and personal life was challenging for WEDOCs. We asked some questions about personal life to get some sense of the challenges. Of respondents, 63% reported being married or partnered. About 85% of all respondent identified as heterosexual, with the remaining 15% split between lesbian and bisexual identified.



About 57% of WEDOCs in the survey have children. Those with children report a median number of 2, with a range of 1-4 children among WEDOCs. The majority of WEDOCs with children tend to have grown children: of the 57 children reported by the group as a whole, 22 are age 25 or older, and 16 are age 18-24. Only 2 of the children reported were under 5 years old.

E. Positive Aspects

Most women executive directors of color found many positive aspects of being a woman of color, even those that did not serve communities of color. Many commented on their ability to connect with, and be seen as familiar to, constituents, and on their ability to use “female” skills in management.

Of particular note is the tone of confidence and competence, particularly in contrast to the general sample where the tone was frequently more negative and resentful. This could be due to relative newness on the job, or a different personality/cultural set that is brought to the job.

The quotations below were drawn from the extensive answers to open-ended qualitative questions on the survey.

a) Can connect with constituents and partners

The most frequently mentioned positive aspect was related to being of the same race/ethnicity as constituents:

Our organization represents a community of color, so it is necessary, I think, for our leadership to represent that community.

My identity as a woman of color matches the main constituency of our services. I feel that I can understand and represent my constituency because I also identify with being part of that constituency.

Families really appreciate and trust my presence.

Greatly enhances access to other communities of color.

The women whom we serve see me as a woman from the Global South and they can identify with me. I am the face of the organization - their face.

An advantage is my personal ability to discern true racism as it occurs vs. the use of the word as a weapon in personal conflicts.

b) Uniqueness—as a rarity one stands out

Many respondents commented somewhat wryly on their unusual status:

I work in the environmental field, and for the most part, people are very respectful of women of color. One does tend to stand out, as it were.

It's often easier for people to remember me and to find me. The fact that I'm a woman of color ED is likely viewed as a "plus" by my organization.

I stand out since there aren't many foundation execs who are women of color.

c) Feel able to employ nontraditional styles

Many women expressed as an advantage the ability to manage differently from men:

My style is quite different than my male counterparts and I believe that if a balance is struck that a woman exec. can be much more effective than a male because of her emotional strength.

Women are more relational and that can be a positive managerial style.

Women tend to draw on the softer aspects of leadership...consensus building, listening, being a leader among many.

d) Serving as a role model to women of color

While perhaps all executive leaders serve as role models, women executive directors of color were highly aware of this aspect of their work:

Given that my organization serves clients of color, my role as ED positions me as a role model and I am given much respect, accordingly.

I can serve as a role model and mentor to other women of color.

I have taken an active interest in mentoring and supporting other women of color in the nonprofit field, and in thinking about how to assist with leadership development with my own staff and the staffs of other nonprofits.

e) Both advantages and disadvantages

Several executives commented on aspects that are advantages and disadvantages in different settings:

Some people feel more comfortable with me immediately, while others immediately feel less comfortable.

My being a woman of color doesn't serve as an advantage internally, but I do think it can help externally with some of our key partners . . . who serve people of color

F. Challenging Aspects of Being a Woman of Color Executive Director

Overall, fewer challenging aspects were reported by respondents than positive aspects.

a) Lack of networks to power

Like many executive directors—not just women of color—respondents felt outside the doors of the corridors of power:

I am not part of circles of mainstream leadership, influence or power.

[A challenge is] coping with the fact that our circles are not well tied into those that have money, yet we have to raise money as the key part of our jobs.

I need more access to major gift philanthropists. As a woman of color, this is an area I could use support with.

I come from another country and it has taken me a while (still learning) to get the networks that can support this organization.

One respondent commented on the challenge of crossing out of community:

[A challenge is] being true to ourselves while we find ways to be "acceptable" to a wide set of audiences.

b) Working against stereotype

A high number of respondents reported feeling a lack of respect and a need to work harder to prove their worth. The interviews suggest that while these feelings are commonly held among women executives of color, these views have not been expressed to those being criticized.

People assume because I look young and I'm short that I'm not the ED. They discount what I have to say because my voice is literally not the loudest in the room.

On the job, I have to work harder to demonstrate my abilities, skills.

Implicit (and sometimes explicit) questioning of my expertise, white supremacy, conflicts related to issues of power and control from white males.

Stereotypes about who I am most aligned with on given political issues.

Initially, [I] was sometimes treated as a secretary by males at meetings, not taken seriously, [but] not true anymore.

I think expectations are higher from some people—they expect more caring, more democracy from a woman ED of color. On the other hand, a different group

of people expects LESS—in some meetings (usually of older, corporate or academic white men) I'm just invisible.

A few talked about particular dynamics in their communities:

I was raised as an Asian woman to be resourceful and expect high quality work of myself. I was also taught that I would have to work three times as hard to achieve an equal footing with caucasians. That's not an advantage, that's a mind-set.

Sexism among men of color "allies." Plus, I'm under 40, and must deal with the older Asian male problem!

c) The struggle to find a work/life balance

In general society, women more than men report concern over balancing work and home life, and professionals of color more frequently than whites are the economic and emotional mainstays in their extended families.

Balancing life, family and work that means the world to you because it is changing the world.

Balancing working full-time with the added number of hours needed for a nonprofit org., and being a mother. It's easier now that the kids are older.

The challenge for me personally is to balance the executive director role with my needs as a creative artist.

G. Interest in Network Activities

Overwhelmingly, women executive directors are enthusiastic about participating in a WEDOC network, with highest interest in a WEDOC roster, opportunities to meet with civic and foundation leaders, an advocacy agenda, and a one-day conference.

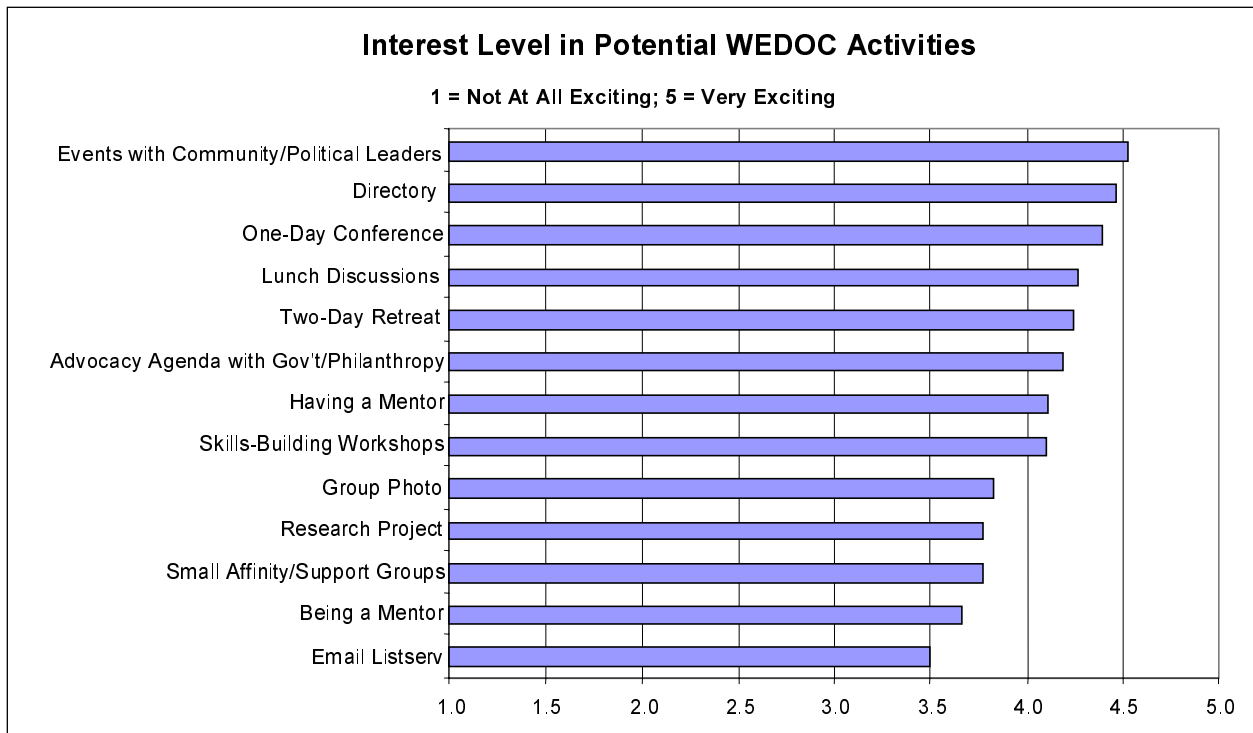
One section of the survey explored interest among WEDOCs for participation in a network. Suggested activities were drawn from interviews and prior meetings; each activity was rated “extremely exciting” by 20% or more of respondents. Overall, there was stronger interest in action activities (such as an advocacy agenda) than in learning opportunities (speakers) or mutual support activities (retreat).

Several activities were identified as “extremely exciting” by a large section of the group, including:

- Events with access to community or political leaders

- A directory of women executive directors of color
- A one day conference for women executive directors of color
- Lunch discussions
- Developing an agenda for advocacy with government or philanthropy

The following chart based on average scores illustrates the high level of interest in the suggested activities:



Women executive directors of color appear interested in learning from one another: approximately half of the WEDOCs surveyed were interested in having a mentor from the group, and 40% were willing to *be* a mentor. A little less than half were interested in a renewal retreat, an idea that those interviewed supported in concept, but suggested that in practice they would probably not attend given competing time demands.

Other activities suggested by respondents included a website, a “celebration,” giving circles, and “strategically building political support for each other’s efforts.”

When asked how often they could imagine participating in a WEDOC event, the most frequent answer was quarterly (42% of the respondents), followed by twice each year (33.3%). Very few could imagine coming to events monthly, likely reflecting the many time commitments of this group.

When asked if there was a particular kind of division that might be most useful if WEDOCs met in small groups, the most useful grouping appeared to be by organization type (45.7% marked this “very useful”). Organization size was less appealing as a sub divider, as was years of experience as an executive director.

As one result of these findings, at the time of this report's publication, CompassPoint is convening a “steering committee” to put together a one-day conference for women executive directors of color as an initial activity.

IV. Concluding Comments

Even in the diverse and vibrant Bay Area nonprofit community, we on the research team did not expect to be able to identify as many as 125 women executive directors of color. This was itself an important finding, and prompted a comment from a focus group participant: “There are more of us than you think!”

The main purpose of this survey was to inform CompassPoint's organizing efforts with the group in the Bay Area, but we hope that the results are of benefit and interest to women executive directors of color everywhere. Women executive directors of color, leading both minority and mainstream organizations, are important contributors to community-based human services, to civil rights and environmental advocacy, to the arts, and to every aspect of the nonprofit sector. In addition, they may well be the face of the next generation of nonprofit leadership.

In addition to providing useful and interesting information for women executive directors of color, we also hope this study will be useful to those who value the contributions of these talented women, in supporting and celebrating their work and their dedication.

VI. Other resources

Readers of this report may be interested in the following resources.

Daring to Lead: Nonprofit Executive Directors and Their Work Experience, by CompassPoint Nonprofit Services. A 2001 study of 1000+ executive directors in five US cities; includes findings on career paths, tenure, salaries and job challenges, as well as strategies for supporting and retaining the sector's leadership talent. Available for free download or hardcopy purchase at www.compasspoint.org (click on "Bookstore").

The Michigan Women's Leadership Project: Leadership for Social Change

A discussion of a pilot project in leadership training for executive directors and board members of organizations serving women and girls. Available for download at <http://www.umich.edu/~cew/mwlpr.pdf>

Technical Assistance and Progressive Organizations for Social Change in Communities of Color: A Report to the Saguaro Grantmaking Board of the Funding Exchange, by Luz Guerra, The Funding Exchange, 1999. A study based on interviews with grassroots organizers, many of whom are women and people of color, with funders, and technical assistance providers. Can be ordered free at <http://www.fex.org> (click on "Publications").

Appendix: Survey Form

Women Executive Directors of Color Survey

Thanks for your time in filing out this brief survey for the WEDOC project (women executive directors of color). This survey is anonymous: the answers will only be viewed and reported in aggregate. If there is a question that you do not feel comfortable answering, you can skip it (you do not have to answer all questions to submit the survey).

For all answers requesting a number (like number of years), please round up to the nearest whole number and type it in numeral form (ie 3, 8, 35, 99 etc)

BEING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1. How long have you been in your current position as executive director?

years

2. Were you working at your current organization before you became the executive director?

- Yes
 No

3. How many previous executive director positions have you had before this one?

4. How many years in total have you served in executive director roles prior to your current job?

years

5. How many years have you worked in the nonprofit sector in total?

years

6. How much prior management experience have you had in for profit organizations (business)?

years (type 0 if none)

7. How much prior management experience have you had in the public sector (government)?

Smaller affinity/support groups that meet regularly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating an agenda for advocacy with government or philanthropy (eg funding for communities of color, funding for girls, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promoting or sponsoring research projects (eg exploring career paths for WEDOCs, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
One day conference for WEDOCs in Bay Area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Two day renewal retreat in relaxing location	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Group photo of WEDOCs to illustrate power of the group (like the photo "A Great Day in Harlem")	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Any other ideas of WEDOC activities/events that would be appealing to you?

12. How often can you imagine attending a WEDOC event of some type?

monthly quarterly twice each year annually unsure

13. If WEDOC met sometimes in small groups, how useful would the following divisions be for you?

	Not useful 1	2	3	Very useful 4
By organization size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
By organization type	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

By years of experience as executive director



14. Are there other ways of organizing WEDOC that would be interesting or helpful to you?

ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION

15. What is the 5 DIGIT zip code where your organization is located?

16. What are the primary activities of the nonprofit organization of which you are the executive director? (choose no more than 3)

- Foundation/grantmaking
- Arts/culture
- Education
- Environmental
- Public Benefit/advocacy
- Health/mental health
- International/foreign affairs
- Religious
- Human Services (non health-care)
- Animal Welfare
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other please specify:

17. Please describe the demographics of the primary target population or market for your organization (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity/race, community for example "Latina youth" "Women with HIV". If none, write "none".)

18. What is your organization staff size (number of paid full-time and part-time staff employees combined)?

people

19. How many of these staff are women of color?

people

20. How many people are on your board of directors?

people

21. How many people on your board of directors are women of color?

people

22. What is your organization's operating budget?

- Less than \$100,000
- \$100,000-499,999
- \$500,000-\$999,999
- \$1,000,000-\$4,999,999
- \$5,000,000-\$9,999,999
- \$10,000,000 and above

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Through our conversations with women executive directors of color so far, we have found that work/life balance is a common issue, so the following section asks about various characteristics of your life. If you do not feel comfortable answering any question, please feel free to skip it. You can still submit the survey without answering every question.

23. What is your ethnicity/race? (mark all that apply)

- African-American
- Arab/Middle Eastern
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Latina
- Native American
- South Asian
- White/Anglo/Caucasian
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other please specify:

24. Are you an immigrant to the United States?

- Yes
- No

If yes, at what age did you immigrate?



31. Is there anything else that we did not ask in this survey that you would like to comment on?

Thanks for your time in filling out this survey.

If you would like to be on a list to receive further information on the WEDOC network, please send an email to tpardisp@compasspoint.org with your name, organization name, address and phone number.

Hit submit and you are finished!



This survey was created with [WebSurveyor](#)

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Please send me _____ copies of *On the Rise: A Profile of Women of Color in Nonprofit Leadership*.

Name _____

Organization/Company _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

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Shipping and handling	_____ \$4.00
Plus 8.5% sales tax for California Residents	_____
Total	_____

Please send this form with a check for the total amount to:
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Related Publications from CompassPoint Nonprofit Services

Daring to Lead

A national study of 1,072 nonprofit executive directors profiles a group of mostly first-time CEO's who are deeply committed to their work and simultaneously frustrated with several aspects of their jobs. Many have had prior management experience in the corporate and government sectors. The majority are women. And the female executives make significantly less than their male peers, even when taking into account experience and agency size.

The study, conducted by CompassPoint Nonprofit Services of San Francisco/Silicon Valley, along with regional partners in Dallas, Fresno, Honolulu, and Washington, D.C., combined a written survey with focus groups, interviews, and examination of two dozen consulting projects on nonprofit executive transitions.

Hardcopies of the survey can be ordered for \$15 (including shipping & handling) from CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, 706 Mission Street, 5th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103. 415-541-9000. On-line ordering at www.compasspoint.org and click on "Bookstore." The full study is also on the web in a downloadable version.

Leadership Lost

A study of 137 nonprofit executive directors that indicates for many, that being an ED is a one time event. With recommendations for boards, EDs and others.

Hardcopies of the survey can be ordered for \$12 (including shipping & handling) from CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, 706 Mission Street, 5th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103. 415-541-9000. On-line ordering at www.compasspoint.org and click on "Bookstore." The full study is also on the web in a downloadable version.

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Anushka Fernandopulle leads the *Managing People* Practice Group at CompassPoint Nonprofit Services where she is a staff consultant in human resources, organizational development, and strategic planning. Prior to doing consulting work, she worked in nonprofit organizations focused on health, education, and grassroots development. She has also worked as a management consultant in the private sector in the organizational effectiveness practice of a leading human resources consulting firm. Her approach to organizations is informed by a background in social anthropology, and an MBA from the Yale School of Management focusing on organizational behavior and nonprofit management.

Jan Masaoka is Executive Director of CompassPoint Nonprofit Services as well as one of its staff consultants in boards of directors, nonprofit finance, program evaluation, and Executive Director Transitions. She writes the *Board Café*, a national newsletter with more than 22,000 subscribers. Her research work includes recent studies on executive director tenure, the nonprofit workforce, and nonprofit space & occupancy needs. For the last four years she has been named by NonProfit Times as one of the "50 Most Influential People" in the nonprofit sector nationwide. Her community activities include serving as President of the San Francisco Foundation Community Initiatives Fund, and as Advisory Board member to the Asian Pacific Islander Wellness Center.

Pardis Parsa's work at CompassPoint Nonprofit Services crosses development, administration, research, and publishing having worked on Board Café and other CompassPoint publications. She also performs and teaches improvisation around the Bay Area. She recently performed in the San Francisco Fringe Festival, doing a personal piece on growing up in the US with an Iranian father and an American mother.

About CompassPoint Nonprofit Services

With offices in San Francisco and San José, CompassPoint Nonprofit Services is one of the nation's leading consulting and training firms serving nonprofit organizations. Through its 40 staff and hundreds of volunteer professionals, CompassPoint provides assistance to nonprofits in fundraising, technology utilization, strategic planning, nonprofit finance, executive transitions, boards of directors, strategic Internet presence, and other areas. Last year CompassPoint conducted more than 600 workshops for Bay Area nonprofits, and consulted to more than 300 nonprofit organizations. In addition to workshops and consulting, CompassPoint publishes three free electronic newsletters--*Food for Thought*, *Silicon Valley Food for Thought* and the *Board Café*. CompassPoint's mission is *to increase the effectiveness and impact of people working and volunteering in the nonprofit sector.*

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