

# SHAFTED



## Executive Summary

**Why nonprofit fundraising staff are shafted, and what to do about it**

**Wild Woman Fundraising Research paper  
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**We've got a problem. Our nonprofit culture is SICK.**

**We've got low donor retention, high fundraising staff turnover, dwindling returns, increasing competition for dollars, and attacks from the private sector calling us "inefficient."**

**Constant fundraising staff turnover hurts nonprofits.**

**Here's our challenge:** Whether it's the Underdeveloped Report telling fundraisers we are set up to fail, with:

- 6 months+ of no fundraising staff
- The revolving door of fundraising professionals
- No culture of philanthropy, and
- No support from senior leadership

**We know we often succeed in spite of, not because of our working environment!**

**If you're tired of turnover, tired of no culture of philanthropy, and tired of being called "inefficient," this research paper may show the solution you're looking for.**

### **The Premise:**

**Nonprofits are wasteful. Why? Not because of overhead or executive salaries. They are wasteful because they churn development staff. The**

effect of constant turnover starts to snowball.

1. Let's say your fundraising person has been fired or left.
2. They left on bad terms, and there's no standardized process or procedure for fundraising.
3. The upshot of this is that no one is in charge of donor stewardship/grant reporting/events for months at a time.
4. You finally hire someone and everything is a mess. There's no one to train them. They don't know what's been done. There's a database that hasn't been updated. Or maybe there's no database.
5. It takes a development staff person 12-18 months to get up to speed in a new job. The catch is that 12-18 months is exactly how long a development staff person stays at a job.
6. Meanwhile there's less money which means staff layoffs, fewer services, executive turnover
7. And the process starts all over again, each subsequent transition making it that much harder for the next fundraising staff person to succeed.

**“Fundraiser turnover may be the canary in the coal mine: What else is off track?”**

**Bottom Line:** Constant fundraising staff turnover hurts nonprofits. How can nonprofits keep Development Staff AND be more effective?

According to a 2013 survey by AFP Oregon/SW Washington,

*“If we could only hire a good fundraiser” is naïve, wishful thinking.”*

*“How do you hire a successful development director? Maybe that’s the wrong question to start with.”*

*“Fundraiser turnover may be like the canary in the coal mine: what else is off track?”*

**Can you keep fundraising staff or other staff through better working conditions precipitated by unions?**

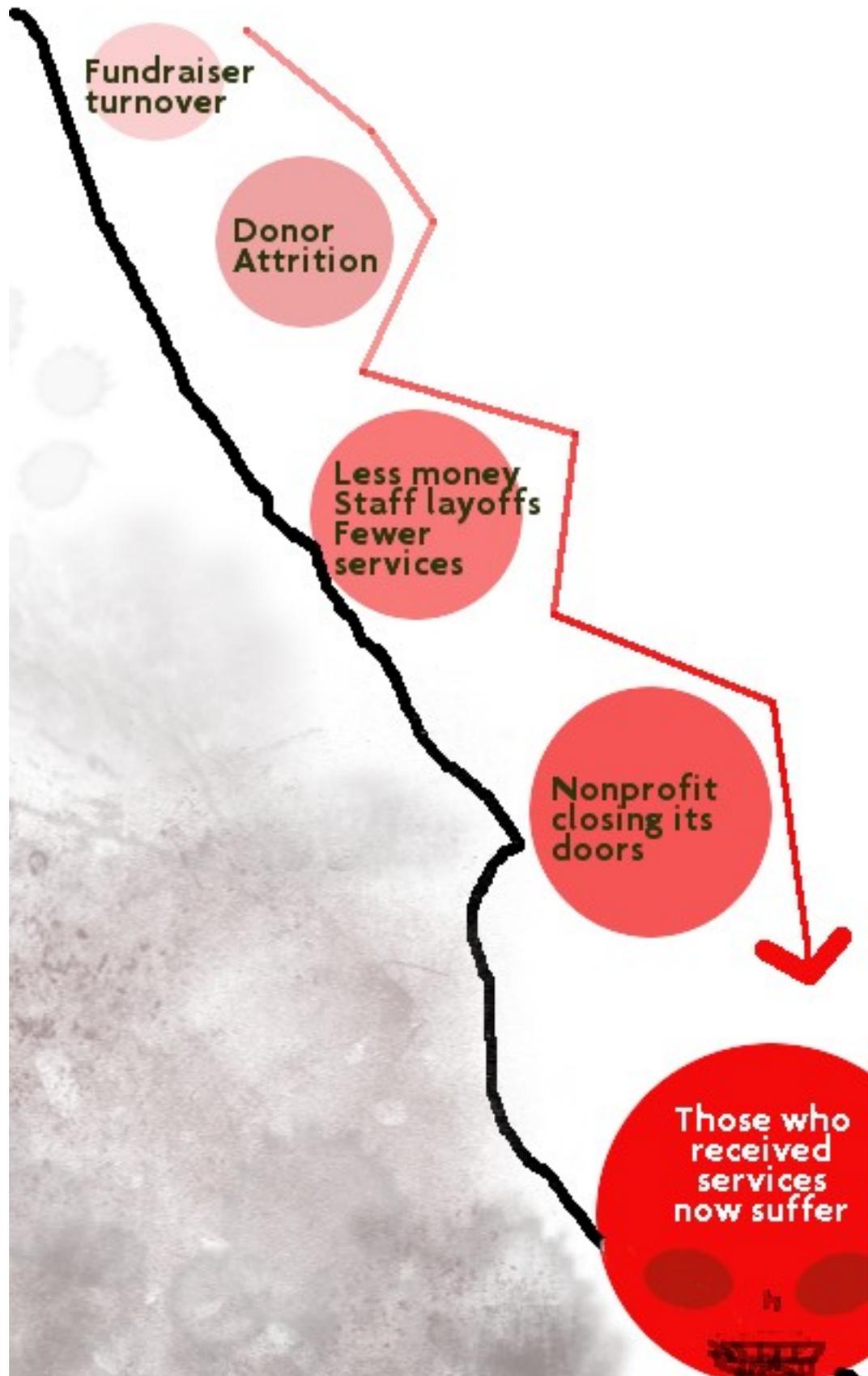
**The goal of this research report** is to examine what solutions exist to help nonprofits become more efficient by retaining fundraising staff.

**Why is this question urgent now?**

**Because our nonprofits are sick.**

- Because fundraiser turnover becomes donor attrition.
- Because we are losing more donors every year
- Because government funding is slowly eroding

- Because if your nonprofit can't make its income goals, then your nonprofit will have to cut back or die.
- Because when your nonprofit cuts back or dies, service recipients will suffer.



## **If this system is broken, What can we do about it?**

### **In a nutshell:**

1. Diversity & Gender bias training
2. Create a role for staff to go to when they have a problem with the boss, even if there's no HR person
3. Mentoring & Training
4. Educate nonprofit staff board and volunteers about dignity of fundraising as a profession.
5. Nonprofit fundraisers have input into organizational budget and have a budget for fundraising.

### **Want to read more?**

**Download the full research report NOW.**

<http://www.wildwomanfundraising.com/underdeveloped-deluge>

