

How to Research a Nonprofit Before Your Interview

Never worked with a nonprofit? This guide shows you where to look, what to look for, and how to turn what you learn into strong answers and smart questions.

Why research matters

You will be asked what you know about NVEEE. Repeating the mission statement is not enough. A strong answer names a specific program, explains what it does, and connects it to the skills you would bring. Research also helps you decide whether NVEEE is the right fit for you [1][2].

1 Where to look and what you will learn

Source	What it tells you
NVEEE's website nveee.org	The mission, our programs (PALS, PALP, and AFFIRM), impact statistics, blog posts, and the internship committee pages. Start here; it is the most current source [1].
Social media and newsletter	What the organization is focused on right now, recent events, and how it talks about its work [2].
GuideStar by Candid guidestar.org	Nonprofit profiles with mission, leadership, programs, and financial information [3].
ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer projects.propublica.org/nonprofits	Free access to IRS Form 990 filings: revenue, expenses, and leadership [4].
IRS Tax Exempt Organization Search	Confirms an organization's tax-exempt status and filings [5]. Small nonprofits may file a short form with limited detail; that is normal [6].
Charity Navigator	Ratings for larger charities. Many small nonprofits are not rated because they do not meet the size criteria; that is not a warning sign [7].
Google News	Recent coverage of the organization and its founder that you can mention in your interview [1].
LinkedIn	Staff, past interns, and your interviewer's background [1].
The cause itself stopbullying.gov	Basic facts about the problem NVEEE works on. For example, national data on how many students experience bullying [8][9].

2 What to look for

- **Mission, programs, and impact are different.** The mission is why the organization exists. Programs are what it does. Impact is what changed as a result.
- **Who it serves.** NVEEE works with youth, families, and communities, with programs for high school students.
- **How it is funded.** Nonprofits rely on grants, sponsors, individual donors, and events. Knowing this helps you understand why fundraising and storytelling matter.
- **Its size.** A small team usually means interns take on real responsibility, with close supervision.
- **Recent initiatives.** Note one recent program, event, or campaign you could mention by name [2].

3 Nonprofit vocabulary to know

Term	Meaning
Nonprofit	An organization that does not distribute profits to owners; any surplus supports its mission [10].
501(c)(3)	The IRS category for charitable organizations. Most donations to them are tax-deductible [11].
Form 990	The annual information return most nonprofits file with the IRS [6].
Board of directors	Volunteers with legal responsibility for the organization who oversee its direction and hire the executive director [12].
Executive Director	The top staff leader, responsible for daily operations [12].
Grant	Funding from a foundation, company, or government for a specific purpose, usually with reporting requirements.
Donor / Sponsor	A donor gives money or goods; a sponsor, often a business, funds a program or event, usually with public recognition.
Outcomes / Impact	The measurable change a program creates, not just the activity itself.

4 Turn your research into answers

Answer “Why NVEEE?” in three parts [2]

1. What you learned about NVEEE beyond the website’s first page
2. What specifically connects with you, and why
3. How it fits your skills and goals

Connect a program to your committee

- **Marketing:** “I saw that PALS brings students together on college campuses each summer. I’d like to help create short recap videos that show families what the experience is like.”
- **Fundraising:** “Your impact page reports the number of youth and families NVEEE has served. That is the kind of outcome funders ask for, and I have experience with research writing.”
- **Program Development:** “PALP runs year-round. I’ve tutored high school students and would like to help with college-planning support.”

- **Community Outreach:** “I’ve organized campus volunteer drives and could help identify partner organizations for student service projects.”

5 Your 45-minute research checklist

- ☐ **10 min:** Read the mission, the PALS, PALP, and AFFIRM pages, the impact page, and two recent blog posts. Write one fact about each.
- ☐ **10 min:** Read your committee page and the Prepare for the Interview page.
- ☐ **5 min:** Look up NVEEE on GuideStar or ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer.
- ☐ **5 min:** Search Google News for NVEEE and its founder.
- ☐ **5 min:** Read one page of national data on bullying and choose one statistic.
- ☐ **10 min:** Draft your “Why NVEEE?” answer, one program-to-committee connection, and three questions.

Sources and further reading

[1] UConn Center for Career Development, Researching the Opportunity, Company, or Program.
<https://career.uconn.edu/researching-the-opportunity-company-or-program/>

[2] Idealist, Interview Q&A: Why Do You Want to Work Here?
<https://www.idealists.org/en/careers/interview-qa-why-want-work-here>

[3] GuideStar by Candid. <https://www.guidestar.org/>

[4] ProPublica, Nonprofit Explorer.
<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/>

[5] IRS, Tax Exempt Organization Search.
<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/tax-exempt-organization-search>

[6] IRS, Annual Exempt Organization Return: Who Must File.
<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/annual-exempt-organization-return-who-must-file>

[7] Charity Navigator, Encompass Rating Methodology.
<https://www.charitynavigator.org/about-us/our-methodology/ratings/>

[8] StopBullying.gov, Facts About Bullying.

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/facts>

[9] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, About Bullying.
<https://www.cdc.gov/youth-violence/about/about-bullying.html>

[10] National Council of Nonprofits, What Is a Nonprofit?
<https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/what-is-a-nonprofit>

[11] IRS, Exemption Requirements: 501(c)(3) Organizations.
<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/exemption-requirements-501c3-organizations>

[12] National Council of Nonprofits, Board Roles and Responsibilities.
<https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/running-nonprofit/governance-leadership/board-roles-and-responsibilities>

Also see: Idealist, 175 Questions to Ask During a Job Interview.
<https://www.idealists.org/en/careers/175-questions-to-ask-during-a-job-interview>