

Questions for All 2012 Candidates for Governor

North Carolina Center *for* Nonprofits

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1. What has been your personal experience with nonprofits as a board member, employee, volunteer, or donor? How do those experiences shape your policy positions and what you would like to accomplish as Governor?
2. How would you and your administration work with nonprofits on policy and budget issues to achieve your goals as Governor?
3. The state relies on nonprofits to provide a wide array of essential services in all 100 counties. Yet, recent state budgets have included drastic cuts to nonprofit grants and contracts. As you propose your budget as Governor, how would you prioritize the restoration of the state's investment in the essential services that are provided by nonprofits?
4. Nonprofits provide 400,000 jobs in North Carolina – more than the banking, construction, or transportation industries. As Governor, what policies would you propose to ensure that nonprofit sector employers are treated equally with for-profit business employers? Examples might include incentives to keep existing jobs and create new jobs in North Carolina.
5. North Carolina law encourages low- and middle-income taxpayers to contribute to the community by offering a tax credit for charitable giving to those who do not itemize deductions on their income taxes. As Governor, how would you work to protect this non-itemizer tax credit, and what, if any, additional incentives would you propose to encourage North Carolinians to give to and volunteer in their communities?
6. Recent studies have found that 77 percent of North Carolina nonprofits that deliver government services through contracts with state agencies have experienced serious problems. These include late payments, underpayments, mid-year changes in contract terms, and multiple requirements for different reports to different agencies. These problems have forced some nonprofits to take out expensive loans, lay off staff, and suspend essential public services. They also violate basic contract law and undermine good working relationships. What steps would you take to fix these inefficiencies for both government and nonprofits?
7. In 2011, state legislators proposed several policies that would impose burdensome mandates, restrictions, and reporting requirement on private nonprofits. Examples have included unrealistic salary caps for private, nonprofit employees and requirements that nonprofits meet efficiency ratios that have been proven inefficient. As Governor, would you oppose such legislation? How would you ensure that the state does not impose new regulations that would thwart the ability of private nonprofits to serve the public?
8. Under current law, some nonprofits that are exempt from federal income tax as 501(c)(3) charitable organizations are not also exempt from state sales taxes (in the form of refunds requested after these taxes are paid). As Governor, how would you work to ensure that all 501(c)(3) organizations that are tax-exempt under federal law are also tax-exempt in North Carolina?
9. How would you prevent local governments from forcing tax-exempt nonprofits that are providing public benefits to pay property taxes, service fees, or other payments in lieu of taxes?
10. The purpose of both the government and nonprofit sectors is to improve the quality of life for all North Carolinians. As Governor, how would you ensure dynamic collaboration between the government and nonprofit sectors? Successful examples from past Governors include designating nonprofit liaisons within each department of the administration, asking each department to hold brown bag lunches with nonprofit leaders to exchange idea to improve programs and policies, and participating in policy forums to get promising ideas from nonprofit entrepreneurs.