



Finding a bookkeeper for your nonprofit

Looking for the perfect bookkeeper is something like looking for an ideal mate. You'll want to think hard about your organization's needs before you start searching for, and commit to, the person who'll handle your day-to-day accounting functions.

Define the role

Before advertising the position, define the role. Crafting a detailed job description that outlines responsibilities will help you attract qualified candidates and give you a consistent yardstick with which to measure them.

Common bookkeeper responsibilities include:

- Preparing and recording accounts payable, accounts receivable and cash receipts,
- Tracking expenses,
- Reconciling bank statements,
- Posting accounts to the general ledger, and
- Preparing for year-end financial audits.

If you'll be relying on your bookkeeper to send donor acknowledgments, order supplies or handle any other clerical duties, spell out those duties in the job description.

Ensure a good fit

Not-for-profits have special bookkeeping challenges that for-profit businesses don't. At the very least, you want a bookkeeper who understands there *are* differences, such as accounting for pledges, donated goods and services, and restricted donations. Candidates also must be:

- Knowledgeable about accounting basics,
- Willing to learn your organization's accounting specifics,

- Attentive to details,
- Deadline-oriented, and
- Computer-literate.

Finally, because your bookkeeper will handle cash, financial records and proprietary information, potential hires must be trustworthy and above reproach. Conduct thorough background and credit checks on anyone you're seriously considering, including following up on any references.

Get what you need

Many organizations hire a bookkeeper because other staff members don't have the necessary accounting skills. If you're in that situation, you may wonder how you can judge the accounting acumen of bookkeeper candidates. We can help you define the role and provide advice on hiring the bookkeeper that meets your needs.

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