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The holidays are upon us and for many, that means showing staff members that you appreciate their contribution, without spending a fortune!

Staff Recognition Resources

Communicating and showing thanks to your donors is important, but don't underestimate the importance of thanking your staff either!

With economic anxiety at an all-time high, it's important to keep staff members in the loop. This helpful article from [The New York Times Small Business Toolkit](#) covers everything from how to make lemonade from lemons in the current economy to stretching limited resources by involving clients or customers in the process.

Raises are being cut, but that's not the only way to keep morale high. This article from [Entrepreneur](#) is written for small businesses, but its suggestions -- such as "time off for good behavior" -- are equally good for nonprofit staff.

Here's a great article from [HR World](#) on 25 ways to reward staff -- without spending a cent! And, here's a list of creative ideas for [building staff connections and improving morale](#) -- again, for free or close to it. For a shorter summary piece, check out this article for [Perks on a Budget](#).

Here's another important resource from [CIO Magazine](#), written during the last economic downturn.

When it comes to acknowledging staff member contributions, Bob Nelson, author of a series of books on 1001 ways to energize and reward employees, is one of the top names in the business. Check your local used bookstore or library for a copy of one of his suggestion-packed books or download low-cost and highly-focused articles at <http://nelson-motivation.stores.yahoo.net/newarticles.html>

For those organizations who use the holidays for gift exchanges, here's a guide for [gifts that can be made at home](#) and another guide for equally homemade "gifts in a jar" that even includes free printable gift tags.

If you're one of the nonprofits that has faced layoffs this year -- or are expecting them in the future -- be prepared. Staff morale suffers during layoffs as people experience sadness at the loss of their colleagues and anxiety in terms of their own futures. Here's a helpful article from BNET on [Managing in the Downturn](#) and a [blog from an employment lawyer](#) that discusses what layoff survivors can do and expect.

Resources

Telecom Discount

The California Teleconnect Fund (CTF) Program was established to provide a 50% discount on selected telecommunication services to qualifying schools, libraries, government-owned and operated hospitals and health clinics and community-based organizations.

To see if your organization qualifies – and for an application – visit

www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/Telco/Public+Programs/CTF/.

403b Changes

New 403b changes go into effect on January 1st. For those organizations who are still trying to make the changes needed – or see how they will be affected – check out this comprehensive PDF from [Mutual of America](#) or this interactive tool from [AIG](#).

Additional information is available on the IRS website at

<http://www.irs.gov/retirement/article/0,,id=172430,00.html>

New Study to Explore Diversity in California's Nonprofit Sector

The Urban Institute's Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy (a nonprofit, nonpartisan, policy research organization in Washington, DC), along with its partners Daylight Consulting Group and the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center at Washington State University, are conducting a survey of a random sample of nonprofits in the California to learn about the racial, ethnic and gender diversity of the staff and boards of directors of nonprofit organizations throughout the state of California. The survey is funded by The California Endowment, James Irvine Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

The survey will begin in early January 2009, with results scheduled for release in the late spring. Nonprofits that complete and return the questionnaire will get a copy of the results and will be eligible to win \$500 (based on a random drawing in appreciation for participating in the survey).

The success of the study depends on getting a good return rate on the survey, so if your organization receives the survey questionnaire, please take time to complete and return it. The study's goal is to provide a full and objective picture of diversity in California's nonprofit sector to enrich the understanding of policymakers, advocates, foundation officials, and the people of California.

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