In June of 2015, the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance’s research team piloted a study to understand which experiences best prepare nonprofit professionals for a CEO position. The pilot targeted the careers of 11 national nonprofit CEOs in the Alliance’s partner network. Examination of professional profiles and bios revealed some interesting trends.

- **Commitment to Life-Long Learning**: 73% hold advanced degrees
- **Mission Commitment**: 55% have always worked within the same mission as the one they now lead
- **Volunteer Leadership Matters**: 73% have volunteered for board service
- **It is OK to Switch Sectors**: 63% have work experience in sectors other than nonprofit

Every CEO has experience in nonprofit program development.

- **Programming 100%**
- **Fundraising 36%**
- **Marketing 36%**
- **Policy/Advocacy 46%**

Nonprofit CEOs identified these skills on their professional profiles:

- **Leadership, leadership development and public speaking skills**: 86%
- **Financial management and capacity-building skills**: 100%
- **Program development skills**: 86%
- **Nonprofit and social entrepreneurship skills**: 100%

This pilot study included CEOs at the Alliance’s partner headquarters and focused on job titles, functions, education, mission, volunteering, skills and longevity.

Great news! The Alliance is expanding this research to include CEOs from nonprofit organizations nationwide. Check back soon to see the results.