

A Brief History of the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO) 1984-2024

1984 – PANO was founded as the Delaware Valley Council of Agencies, a 501(c)(3) membership organization serving and advancing the charitable nonprofit sector through leadership, advocacy, education, and services in order to improve the quality of life in Pennsylvania.

1990 – The organization moved to Pittsburgh and opened a computer lab.

1992 – PANO reorganized as a statewide advocacy organization.

1995 – PANO reorganized through the financial and motivational leadership of the Huston Foundation of Conshohocken and the Stewart Huston Charitable Trust of Coatesville. A new Board was recruited and staff were hired to open an office in Harrisburg. A Pennsylvania Economy League study, commissioned by PANO in 1990, served as a roadmap for the setting of priorities.

1995-1997 – PANO began to demonstrate advocacy leadership by facilitating the charity coalition (Charities Build Communities) for passage of Pennsylvania Act 55 of 1997, the Purely Public Charities Act. Pennsylvania's Act 55 incorporated the Federal law for charitable exemptions, with a unique set of Pennsylvania-specific requirements. This landmark legislation went on to become a model for other states as they addressed issues around tax exemption and unfair competition issues.

2001-2002 – PANO became a replication partner for the [Standards for Excellence®](#), an Ethics and Accountability program for the nonprofit sector. PANO launched its Standards for Excellence training and certification program for charities.

2004 – PANO was awarded the Standards for Excellence Seal of Excellence from the National Institute.

2006 – PANO began sending staffers as delegates to the Nonprofit Congress (now the National Council of Nonprofits) and facilitated a 16-member Pennsylvania delegation.

2008 – PANO held its first PA Nonprofit Congress, with over 150 delegates gathering at the Capitol in Harrisburg for a daylong session of choosing the agenda for the nonprofit sector in Pennsylvania.

2009 – A bipartisan Pennsylvania Nonprofit Caucus was formed and convened to address statewide policy issues. PANO was a leader in introducing legislation to increase the volunteer mileage reimbursement rate.

2011 – PANO launched the Standards for Excellence® Basics Recognition program in PA, helping organizations set strong policies and procedures in place for good governance, management, and legal compliance. The first nonprofit in PA is awarded Basics Recognition.

2012-2013 – PANO actively protected the rights of charitable nonprofits. On the federal level PANO has monitored and acted on the Combined Federal Campaign and the Charitable Giving Incentive; on the state level, PANO has protected the Property Tax Exemption.

2013 – PANO held a successful conference where we honored our outgoing Executive Director, Joseph Geiger. Later that year, [Anne Gingerich, MSW](#), was hired as PANO's new Executive Director.

2014 – PANO embarked on a Listening Tour, hosting a series of 20 conversations with 320 individuals around the state with the goal of understanding the unique challenges facing nonprofits in various regions of the Commonwealth as well as the role PANO could play in helping to address those challenges. This tour laid the groundwork for PANO's strategic priorities for the next few years, as well as our regional events.

2015 – PANO actively developed partnerships with regional and statewide conveners to provide programming steeped in the unique as well as common needs expressed by those working on the front lines.



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PANO advocated to continue protecting the rights of charitable nonprofits as provided in Pennsylvania's Purely Public Charities Act.

2016 – The annual collaborative conference strategically moved from Harrisburg to State College for a more centrally located event. PANO also officially launched the Consultant Collaborative, providing management support consulting to over 300 nonprofits throughout the state since its inception.

2017 – New digs for PANO as we moved our office from Linglestown Road to Lindle Road, where we remain today, renting space in the beautiful WITF building in Harrisburg. PANO hired its first Development Director, a part-time position that later became full-time. PANO also hired its first mostly-remote staff person, [Christina Spadaro](#), as our Learning and Education Director; she has since grown into the role of PANO's Assistant Director.

2018 – PANO gets a new look! This year saw PANO retire our original logo, rebrand our website, and launch a new member database, Neon One CRM. PANO also officially started its own racial justice journey, bringing in an outside facilitator for a retreat focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

2019 – PANO started the Don Kramer Helpdesk Fund in honor of Don as one of PANO's founders, his 34 years of service on the PANO board, and his ongoing support of [askPANO](#) – our nonprofit helpdesk for all-things-nonprofit management.

2020 – The world went virtual in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, and PANO's services were no exception. PANO moved all programming, including the annual Collaborative Conference, online for the first time ever! PANO also updated and adopted its [current vision, mission, and strategic objectives](#).

2021 – For the first time in PANO's history, we obtained government funding due to our advocacy efforts at the state level, holding our first virtual convening of Pennsylvania nonprofits and the legislators who support them. Additionally, we were lucky enough to recruit [Faduma Hasson](#), our current Membership and Administrative Specialist.

2022 – PANO celebrated [Tish Mogan](#) for her 20 years of service as PANO's Standards for Excellence Director, starting our Standards for Excellence Fund in her honor, and welcomed [Heather Giampapa](#) as the new Standards for Excellence and Development Director. PANO entered our first full year of recruiting and convening cohorts to review our Standards for Excellence materials through a racial justice lens, hiring [Kevin Burrell](#) as our Strategic Initiatives Project Manager to facilitate this work. And for the first time, PANO hired a part-time Consultant Collaborative manager, [Stephanie Chapuis](#), to assist with the influx of consulting requests that we now routinely receive.

2023 – PANO had a busy year in advocacy, including but not limited to the following: 1) Supporting the reignition of [Pennsylvania's Charitable Nonprofit Caucus](#) and the National Council of Nonprofit's [National Nonprofit Legislative Caucus](#); 2) Supporting our priority of a strong nonprofit workforce in Pennsylvania – in part by supporting the advocacy efforts of three other statewide organizations, as well as convening briefings for freshmen legislators and a joint budget request with 8 other organizations; 3) Going to the Capitol with a group of 14 board, staff, and PANO members to advocate for an embedded line item for PANO in the state budget.

2024 – Currently, PANO has around 1,000 members that employ over 24,000 individuals. Our members provide a wide array of services and represent various regions of the state.

