

You're Not Alone: How to Meet Your Fellow 'Risk People'



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Being a nonprofit risk professional can be a lonely job.

Maybe you manage a team, but the risk department doesn't seem fully integrated into operations at your nonprofit. Maybe you're a "department of one." Or maybe risk management isn't even part of your job duties — just a gap you've seen at your organization and tried to fill as best you could.

No matter your situation, you might feel like colleagues hesitate to share their most exciting ideas with you, for fear that you'll ask questions about those pesky risks. They might see you as the "department of no."

Nonprofit risk management is always challenging. But it doesn't have to be lonely. One way to alleviate nonprofit risk management loneliness: enroll in NRMC's [Emerging Risk Leaders Certificate Program](#). This interactive virtual program serves nonprofit professionals who want to hone their risk skills and understanding.

Last fall I had the chance to take part in an ERLCP cohort, watching ideas spark and connections blossom. This diverse and dynamic group of 12 risk professionals learned strategies and techniques for managing risk at their nonprofit. In group exercises, they worked through hypothetical scenarios to learn how to address real-life risk challenges. The participants learned a lot from NRMC, which we enjoy; it's one of the ways we fulfill our educational mission as a nonprofit ourselves. But better yet, the ERLCP cohort members learned from each other and gained new peers to call when they face a tough risk question.

"The tools NRMC provides are so helpful, but furthermore, being able to brainstorm with other participants in similar positions and at other nonprofit organizations was invaluable!" said Alexis Benavidez, Chief Administrative Officer at Communities In Schools of Nevada, who took part in a recent ERLCP cohort. "It's rare to get those groups together and yet so beneficial, as we all face very similar challenges but really don't have other forums to discuss them."

I'm excited to take over teaching ERLCP this year from our Executive Director Melanie Lockwood Herman, who's taught the program since it launched in 2022. [Applications for the next](#) cohort are open now. Participation costs \$395 for nonmembers or \$158 for people who work for a [current NRMC affiliate member organization](#). The program encompasses three 3-hour virtual workshops. Typically, sessions take place about two weeks apart. We assign a little homework and additional reading for those who want to learn more. And we ask each cohort

member to take on a risk-related project at their organization: the project can be as big or light a lift as feels doable for them at that time. Curiosity and an open mindset are required, but we don't require that participants have any prior risk management training or experience.

If your New Year's resolution is to deepen your risk knowledge and your network, ERLCP might be for you. [Learn more and apply](#) today.

Rachel Sams is Lead Consultant and Editor at the Nonprofit Risk Management Center. Reach her with questions and ideas about the ERLCP program at rachel@nonprofitrisk.org or (505) 456-4045.