

# NPSP: Primary Contact vs. Primary Affiliation

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- What is a Primary Affiliation?
- So, What's Causing the Confusion?

## What is a Primary Contact?

From the perspective of an Account, the Primary Contact is the one go-to contact for all communication with that Organization or Household. On a Household, the Household's first Contact (likely the Contact you used to create the Household) is automatically assigned as the Primary Contact. On an Organization, the Primary Contact is manually assigned. **An Organization or Household may have one and only one Primary Contact.**

For information on changing the Primary Contact for a Household, see [Change the Primary Contact for a Household \(/articles/Resource/NPSP-Primary-Contact\)](#). To change the Primary Contact for an Organization, simply edit the Account record and select a different Contact in the Primary Contact field.

## What is a Primary Affiliation?

A Primary Affiliation is the *Account* that the Contact is associated with more than any other Account, such as their employer. While the Primary Affiliation is typically used for representing the employer/employee connection between an Organization Account and a Contact, it could also be used to represent a donor who's a board member for a specific foundation. **A Contact may have one and only one Primary Affiliation, though a single Organization Account may be designated as the Primary Affiliation for multiple Contacts.**

For information on creating or modifying Affiliations, see [Add and Manage Organization Accounts \(/articles/Resource/NPSP-Add-and-Manage-Organization-Accounts\)](#).

# So, What's Causing the Confusion?

The Primary Contact for a Household is a relatively clear concept. Each Household has one contact that's designated as the "Head of Household." When you start looking at Organization Accounts, however, the concept gets a bit more confusing.

The use of the word "Primary" for both Primary Contact and Primary Affiliation, as they relate to Organization Accounts, has caused the confusion. Let's look at an example of how these two things work within the context of an Organization Account.

John, Sally, and Veronica all work for Test Foundation. John and Sally are employees, and Veronica is the CEO. They each have Affiliations with other Organizations (for example, the ABC Foundation), and have an Affiliation record in Salesforce for each of those Affiliations. But since the Test Foundation is John, Sally, and Veronica's employer, it's listed as the Primary Affiliation for all of them.

On John's Contact record, you can see his list of Affiliations to other Organizations, as well as the designation that Test Foundation is his Primary Affiliation.

Contact Detail

EditDeleteRelationships Viewer

▼ Contact Details

NameJohn JonesPrivate

Account NameJones HouseholdBirthdate5/28/1972

Primary AffiliationTest Foundation

Title

Favorite ColorBlue

Description

Organization Affiliations

New Affiliation

Organization Affiliations Help

Action	Affiliation: Affiliation Name	Account Name	Role	Status	Start Date	End Date
<a href="#">Edit</a>   <a href="#">Del</a>	<a href="#">AF-000005</a>	<a href="#">Test Foundation</a>	Program Officer	Current	4/1/2016	
<a href="#">Edit</a>   <a href="#">Del</a>	<a href="#">AF-000009</a>	<a href="#">ABC Foundation</a>	Board Member	Current	4/1/2015	

Now, if you look directly at John's Test Foundation Affiliation record, you'll see that the **Primary** checkbox is checked. That checkbox indicates that Test Foundation is John's **Primary Affiliation**, however, **it does not necessarily mean that John is the Primary Contact at Test Foundation.**

### Affiliation Detail

[Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Clone](#)

#### ▼ Affiliation Information

Organization	<a href="#">Test Foundation</a>	Contact	<a href="#">John Jones</a>
Role	Program Officer	Status	Current
Start Date	4/1/2016	End Date	
Primary	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Description			
Created By	<a href="#">Sarah Smith</a> , 4/1/2016 10:40 AM		
Last Modified By	<a href="#">Sarah Smith</a> , 4/1/2016 10:47 AM		

[Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Clone](#)

Over on the Test Foundation Account record, we see something different with respect to "Primary." There can only be one Primary Contact for the organization—and it's Veronica, since she's the CEO and the point-of-contact at the Test Foundation. As for Sally and John, while they work at Test Foundation and it's their Primary Affiliation, they aren't the main points-of-contact for that organization. They're listed as Affiliated Contacts for Test Foundation, rather than as Primary Contacts.

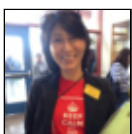
### Account Detail

[Edit](#) [Delete](#)

Account Name	Test Foundation <a href="#">[View Hierarchy]</a>	Phone	(415) 555-1212
Account Record Type	Org <a href="#">[Change]</a>	Fax	
Type		Website	
Primary Contact	<a href="#">Veronica Miller</a>	Industry	Not For Profit

[Delete](#)

Affiliated Contacts		New Affiliation						<a href="#">Affiliated Contacts Help</a> 	
Action	Affiliation: Affiliation Name	First Name	Last Name	Role	Status	Start Date	End Date		
<a href="#">Edit</a>   <a href="#">Del</a>	<a href="#">AF-000005</a>	<a href="#">John</a>	<a href="#">Jones</a>	Program Officer	Current	4/1/2016			
<a href="#">Edit</a>   <a href="#">Del</a>	<a href="#">AF-000006</a>	<a href="#">Sally</a>	<a href="#">Anderson</a>	Volunteer Coordinator	Current	4/1/2016			
<a href="#">Edit</a>   <a href="#">Del</a>	<a href="#">AF-000007</a>	<a href="#">Veronica</a>	<a href="#">Miller</a>	CEO	Current	4/1/2016			



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