

# Engaging Skill Based Volunteers

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# Current Volunteer Engagement

Do you currently involve volunteers in roles that use specific skills/talents?

- YES- Many!
- YES- Rarely OR a few of these volunteers
- NO- None
- I'm not sure right now

# The Trend

## MAVA Shifting Environment Survey

- 37% of organizations are seeing increased interest in developing or utilizing workplace skills
- 45% of organizations reported involving volunteers in leadership positions or managing projects

# Why the change?

**Boomers** want to have an impact and to use their professional skills



Building the Profession

**Gen X** – Wants their time to be used effectively

**Millennials** want:

- ✓ Opportunity to make an impact, see real results and be **CHALLENGED**
- ✓ Professional development and resume building opportunities
- ✓ Opportunities to be engaged in leadership roles
- ✓ To gain ownership of project based assignments

# Other factors

**Corporate volunteerism** is on the rise.

**Job seekers** are looking to build skills.

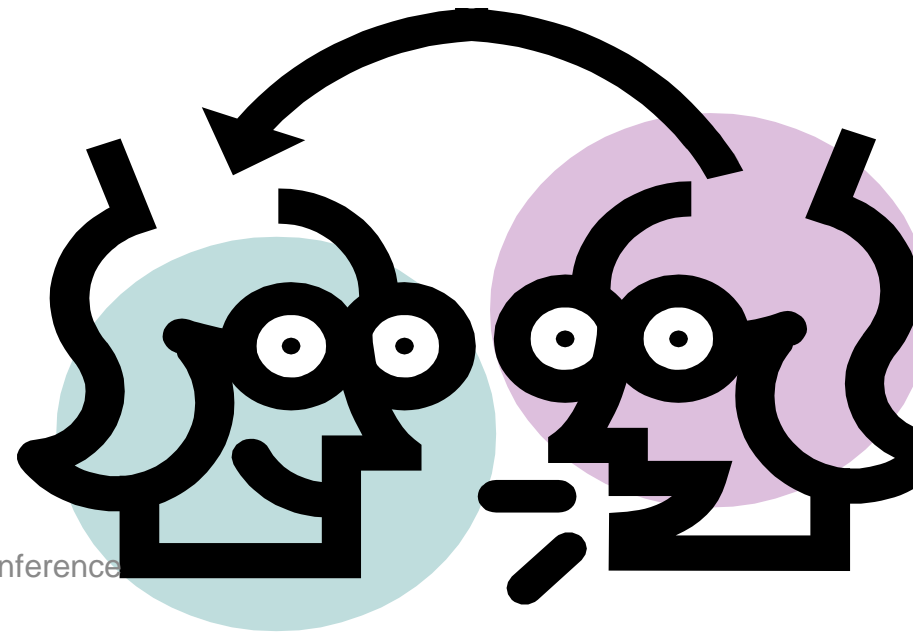
**Organizations** are feeling pressed to do more with limited resources.



# Share with a neighbor

What changes are you seeing from volunteers interested in sharing their skills?

- More volunteers interested in this?
- Differences in types of skills?
- New demographics of volunteers interested in skill based volunteering?



# Definition and Value of Skill Based Volunteering

# **Skill based volunteerism is**

Tapping the specialized skills, talents, and expertise of volunteers to help the organization meet its mission.



# Skill-based volunteering differs from general volunteering in that:

The volunteer is **using specific skills, credentials, and experience** that is not available in the general population.

You are seeking volunteers who have **skills or talents they bring with them** that go beyond what you will be training them to do.

# Examples

Roles can be ongoing, project based or one time.

## Examples:

- Project Managers
- Accounting / finance professionals
- Marketing professionals
- IT
- Building repairs
- Gardening
- Marketing



# ACTIVITY: Examples of Volunteer Roles

In small groups

- Step 1 – Develop a list of skills-based volunteer roles in your organizations currently
- Step 2 – Develop a list of potential new volunteer roles for your organizations

# Value of skill based volunteerism

## Deloitte:

- 72% of nonprofits believe they could increase their organization's social impact if they could get contract and consulting resources on a pro bono basis.

2009 Deloitte Volunteer IMPACT Survey

## National Council on Aging:

- The **R**eturn **O**n **I**nvestment with volunteers in higher responsibility roles was **8 to 1**

# Value

- Bring skills that you do not have on staff and cannot afford to pay for
- Allow more work to get done
- Can teach staff new skills
- Bring a new perspective to the organization
- May become a donor or increase donation
- Increase retention through higher volunteer satisfaction
- What else?

## Action Plan

### 1. Benefits of volunteers

# In this section we will cover

How to:

- Revise roles and develop skill based volunteer opportunities
- Conduct outreach and recruit skill based volunteers
- Screen, match and onboard skill based volunteers
- Orient volunteers and train staff for skill based volunteers

# **Eight Steps for Building a Skill Based Volunteer Program**

# Step 1:

**Work to establish an organizational culture that values volunteers in skills-based roles.**

WHY: Buy-in from staff at all levels of the organization is essential for success.

HOW: Survey staff on opportunities and challenges they see from skills-based volunteers.



# Create a culture that values skill based volunteers

- ☐ Start with seeking support from your supervisor and top management.
- ☐ Hold discussion with staff on the value that skill based volunteers would bring.
- ☐ Assess the opportunities and concerns staff have about volunteers in skill based roles and develop plans to address concerns.

# Step 2:

**Define skills-based and higher responsibility roles for volunteers throughout the organization.**

**WHY:** This will help build excitement and is the place to start when creating new roles for volunteers.

**HOW:** Use trend information, use staff survey results, listen to what staff need

# Defining new roles cont.

☐ Work with staff to revise current volunteer position descriptions:

- Revise current position descriptions to include higher level of skills that would allow position to be more useful

☐ Hold brainstorming session with staff on new skill based roles:

- Prioritize which roles to try first
- Start with the department most interested in new roles

# Step 3:

## **Provide training for staff on working with volunteers in skills-based roles.**

HOW: Use results of staff assessment as a guide as you decide what to include in training.

- Possible topics include: Value of skill based volunteers, what skilled volunteers expect, task delegation, team-building, supervision strategies, and communication.

# Volunteers in these roles demand a new mindset



- ☐ A new staff / volunteer relationship
- ☐ Volunteers as leaders or managers need a new type of training
- ☐ Agency needs “buy in” at every level – leadership, management & front line staff
- ☐ Be open to creating new volunteer roles

# Step 4:

## **Have systems in place for volunteers in higher responsibility and skill based roles**

WHY: It takes good systems to...

- Track the skills volunteers have
- Match volunteer skills with needs
- Train and support skill based volunteers

# Getting systems ready:

- ☐ Revise intake and volunteer record keeping to track skills and interests.
- ☐ Add needed policies for volunteers in new roles.
- ☐ Design systems for input from volunteers.

# Getting systems ready cont.

## ❑ Design orientation and training for skill based positions

- Focus on **orienting** the volunteer to your organization. Assume they bring the skills they need to the position.
  - Provide written expectations for volunteering at your organization
- Design **training** to cover what they need to know to apply their skills for your organization. This might include:
  - Organizational culture – how to work with your staff
  - How to work with your clients
  - How to adapt their skills for your setting



# Scenario Activity – Getting Buy-in

- Discuss the scenario with others at your table and using the information we've covered so far in the workshop, determine a plan for how you would address the situation.

# Step 5: Recruiting the volunteers

- ☐ Find skills from within your organization's volunteer pool
  - Record work place skills of volunteers during initial interview/application.
  - Tap into what staff who work with volunteers know about the volunteer skills.
- ☐ Ask corporate partners for volunteers with specific skills
- ☐ Do targeted volunteer recruitment

# Step 6:

**Reshape the volunteer interview to a mutual exploration of interest and pay attention to a good match of the volunteer with the position.**

WHY: Mutual exploration on the part of the volunteer and the agency of what is needed and how the volunteer's skills fit that need is crucial.

# Interviewing and Matching

- ☐ Conduct personal interviews to screen each volunteer and learn about their skills and interests.
- ☐ Be open to mutually designing the position for the best fit.
- ☐ For project based positions, develop a written agreement.
- ☐ If you do not have good fit for the volunteer, indicate that early in the process and offer suggestions for other places to volunteer.

# Step 7:

## **Update volunteer recognition to appeal to skills-based volunteers.**

How? - Share the impact of their work with the volunteer.

- Provide public recognition for the skills the volunteer brought to the organization.
- Offer education about the need your organization addresses and your impact.

# Recognizing skilled volunteers:

- ❑ Share with them the impact of their work.
- ❑ Provide public recognition for the skills they brought to the organization.
- ❑ Offer education about the need your organization addresses and your impact. (Many skill based volunteer find learning to be a good form of recognition).

# Step 8:

## **Assess progress and plan next steps.**

WHY: Developing skills based volunteers is an ongoing process where you keep trying new ideas and increasing the number of ways skill based volunteers are involved.

# Assessing and Planning

- ☐ Ask staff who have involved skill based volunteers for feedback.
- ☐ Ask volunteers for feed back.
- ☐ Continue to build culture that supports skill based volunteer involvement.
- ☐ Go back to Step 2 and plan next level of skill based roles to add.



# Discussion

Which of the eight steps we covered will be the most challenging for your organization? How will you overcome the challenge?

# Wrap up

- Revise roles and develop skill based volunteer opportunities
- Conduct outreach and recruit skill based volunteers
- Screen, match and onboard skill based volunteers
- Orient volunteers and train staff for skill based volunteers

# Wrap Up

## Action Plan

**This week I will:**

**Over next three months I will:**

Thank you for attending the workshop.

More information at: [www.mavanetwork.org](http://www.mavanetwork.org)

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