Now What? Emerging Strategies for Leading Volunteers

Minnesota Nonprofit Leadership Conference
June 14, 2023
About MAVA

The Minnesota Alliance for Volunteer Advancement (MAVA) advances the power of volunteerism to deepen community impact through uplifting community voice, building connections, providing education, and promoting advocacy.

We envision a world in which everyone has an equitable opportunity to positively impact their community through volunteerism.
Agenda

- Review MAVA’s 2022 Trends Survey findings vs. 2021 and 2018
- Identify 8 current volunteer engagement trends
- Explore recommendations for effective volunteer engagement in 2023 and beyond
- Brainstorm next steps based on recommendations
Introductions

Over the last year, what has been your biggest pain point related to volunteerism?

Introduce yourself an a neighbor, share your experience

Any commonalities?
About the Trends Survey

- Distributed to MAVA contacts and partners
- 154 responses in 2021; 162 in 2021; 239 in 2018
- 2022 survey was abbreviated version of 2021/2018 surveys
- 32% of respondents from outside MN
By the Numbers: Enough Volunteers?

• **65%** - “we are short on the amount of volunteers for our needs”

• **21%** - “we have about the right amount of volunteers for our needs”

• **13%** - “we have more people who want to volunteer than we have space for”
By the Numbers: Volunteer Inquiries

When asked why they believe inquiries are down in 2022:
- “People seem to have less time to volunteer” (55%)
- “People seem to be less interested in volunteering” (48%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More volunteer inquiries</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer volunteer inquiries</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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By the Numbers: Volunteer Categories

- **Generation Z**: 33% of organizations report *increase*, 10% decrease
- **Traditionalist**: 9% increase, 40% *decrease*
- **Gen X, Millennials, Boomers**: *little change* from previous years
- **Individuals from corporations**: 13% increase, 19% decrease
- **Groups from corporations**: 22% increase, 16% decrease (*improved over 2021* when organizations reported 17% increase, 28% decrease)
By the Numbers: Volunteer Trends

- Short-term volunteering interest is recovering
- Volunteers seem busier than ever (to organizations)
- Impact of regulations may be lessening post-pandemic
- Interest in virtual volunteering peaked sharply but may be resetting
By the Numbers: Consistent Trends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increased interest in volunteers using workplace skills</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2018</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased interest in helping the local community</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased interest in evening and weekend volunteering</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased interest in volunteering with friends and family</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older volunteers increasingly aging out</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased interest in student internships</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By the Numbers: What’s Working?

- Involved volunteers in new positions
- Reinvigorated recruitment
- Added remote and virtual
- Increased internal advocacy
- Increased flexibility

- Organizations with the right amount or more volunteers
- Organizations short on volunteers
Small Group Discussion

Reflect: Does this data line up with your experience over the past several years?

What surprised you?
8 Trends for 2023 and Beyond

1. **Virtual Volunteerism is Here to Stay**
2. **Recruitment Alone is Not Enough**
3. **Flexibility is More Important Than Ever**
4. **Internal Advocacy Can’t Be Overlooked**
5. **Variety is Key**
6. **Groups are Changing**
7. **Skill-Based Continues to Grow**
8. **New Volunteers Have Different Needs**
Virtual Volunteerism is here to stay

- In 2021, 69% organizations reported adding virtual/remote opportunities (top strategy that year)
- Demand for virtual opportunities has declined some, but is still strong
- In 2022, only 39% of orgs added virtual/remote roles (10th strategy)
- Demand is there, but organizations are not prioritizing development of remote opportunities
Recruitment alone is not enough

• Despite growing emphasis on recruitment, volunteer shortages continue to be a problem
• Volunteer leaders suspect people have less time and less interest in volunteering
• Increased recruitment won’t help if positions aren’t appealing

“It's hard to speculate on why people AREN'T coming because we can't ask them, of course. My personal thoughts are that it's similar to issues in filling jobs right now - there's lots of shifting going on, resetting priorities, and a lot of competition for people's time, not just for other volunteer opportunities but for everything else that people want to do now that the world has mostly opened up again.”
Flexibility is more important than ever

51% of organizations with enough volunteers added flexibility; only 34% of organizations short on volunteers used this strategy.

Self-scheduling, hybrid roles, weekend shifts all increase flexibility.

Flexibility seems to be very important for volunteers – maybe more than ever. What I really think it comes down to is volunteers prioritizing their time and wanting balance in their lives – whether that’s work, home, or volunteer life.”
Internal advocacy can’t be overlooked

- In 2022, 46% of organizations with enough volunteers employed internal advocacy; only 23% of those short on volunteers did this.

- Training staff, gaining buy-in, lobbying for resources, highlighting volunteer work in communications, etc., can increase how volunteerism is valued.
Variety is key

• **74%** of organizations with enough volunteers added new roles or positions, while only **50%** of those short on volunteers did this

• Creating new opportunities is important, but it’s also important to ask if they are the **right** positions

“[Our team did] dream-casting with staff to include volunteer roles where there have not been.”
Groups are changing

- Interest from corporate groups is increasing and seems to be headed back toward pre-pandemic levels.
- Groups are smaller in numbers.
- Some seeking longer-term relationships/partnerships.
Skills-Based volunteering continues to grow

- **29%** of organizations in 2022 reported increased interest from volunteers in using workplace skills; 2021 and 2018 were similar

- Some organizations are having success with pro-bono volunteer programs
New volunteers have different needs

- Increased interest from youth - Generation Z
- BIPOC communities are often an untapped resource
- Removing barriers and adding flexibility are key for all of these groups
Recommendations

- AMP UP ADVOCACY
- EVALUATE YOUR VOLUNTEER ROLES
- ASSESS YOUR PROCESSES
- SHIFT FROM PASSIVE TO ACTIVE RECRUITMENT
Amp Up Advocacy

- Share this report with organizational leaders
- Conduct training for staff
- Meet with supervisors and department leads
- Hold a “Dream Casting” session
- Ask for more resources
- Share volunteer success stories
Evaluate Your Volunteer Roles

Which of your volunteer positions:

- Can be done virtually/remotely
- Allows volunteers to use workplace skills
- Takes place outside of normal business hours
- Do not require an ongoing commitment
- Is open/accessibile to youth or students
- Can be converted to team/job-share positions
Evaluate Your Volunteer Roles

Ask two important questions:

1. What volunteer opportunities do you have?

2. What volunteer opportunities are you missing?
Can your initial volunteer application or intake format be shortened?

Can orientation or training for some positions take place on the first day of volunteering?

Are there some volunteer positions that don’t need a background check?

Are your applications or training materials available online? (esp. for virtual positions!)
Shift from Passive to Active Volunteer Recruitment

- Reach out to clubs/teams/service learning offices at local high schools and colleges
- Build relationship with BIPOC-led community groups
- Attend community events that are not volunteer-focused
- Contact small to mid-sized local companies
- Focus recruitment language on volunteer impact and benefits instead of organization’s needs
Activity

Choose one recommendation to explore. Divide into groups and discuss action steps you might take in that area.
Activity

Some questions to consider:

❖ Why does this recommendation speak to you?

❖ What steps have you taken or could you take to implement this strategy?

❖ What resources would you need to make it work?
Now What?

❑ Use the workbook to start your own action planning

❑ Check out the full Post-Pandemic Volunteerism report at www.mavanetwork.org/Resources>Research and Initiatives>Shifting Environment

Stay in touch!

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Join us for two and half days of networking and interactive sessions, in a hybrid light format facilitated by national and local innovators in the field of volunteer engagement, leadership, and more.

Registration is open through July 14th at mavanetwork.org!