Virtual Meeting Tips & Best Practices

Rules of Engagement

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Use the “Raise Hand” feature located under “reactions” to be recognized to come off mute and ask a question during the Q&A portion of the Webinar.

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Leveraging Transformative Resources to Meet Community Needs and Ignite a Lifetime of Civic Engagement

June 8, 2023
Office of Research and Evaluation
Setting the Stage

Jehyra M. Asencio Yace, PhD
Research Analyst, AmeriCorps
Stability in the national volunteering rate … until COVID

National Volunteering Rate, 2002-2021

AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation

**Life Cycle Evaluations**
- Build evidence in high priority areas of work
- Use a bundling approach
- Increase evaluation capacity
- Foster peer learning

**Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) and the 2020 Cohort Evaluation**
- Program established by congress in 2009.
- In 2022, AmeriCorps expanded the VGF Program scope to other organizations and entities and has a current cohort of 18 grantees nationwide.
- Evaluation designed with FY 2020 Cohort will be completed in early Fall.
- AmeriCorps first effort to examine program models and best practices.
Volunteer Management Practices

▪ Match Volunteers to Roles Based on Interest
▪ Support Volunteers Professionally and Emotionally
▪ Clearly Define Volunteers' Roles
▪ Train Volunteers and Provide Learning Opportunities
▪ Provide Volunteers with Feedback and Recognition

Volunteer Recruitment Practices

▪ Communicate the Organization's Investment in Volunteers
▪ Match Volunteers' Motivations to Volunteer Recruitment Messaging
▪ Explicitly Invite Different Populations of Interest
Samantha Spinney, PhD
Principal Investigator of Volunteer Generation Fund Evaluation, ICF

Volunteer Generation Fund Evaluation
Preliminary Findings
Evaluation Overview

Purpose:
Learn more about how state commissions who received a Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) grant in 2020 are using funding to support volunteer management.

Participating state commissions:
- Florida
- Iowa
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- North Carolina
- Utah
Volunteer Recruitment & Retention Strategies

Strategies provided by commissions during training and capacity-building activities:

- Writing stronger volunteer position descriptions
- Creating easy entry activities
- Recruiting different types of volunteers
- Aligning volunteers to tasks they enjoy doing
- Demonstrating appreciation

Strategies depend on the type of volunteer, size of organization, capacity of organization, staffing, etc.
Emerging Topics in Volunteer Engagement

Managing volunteers in COVID-19

➢ Stopping or pivoting use of volunteers
➢ Success engaging volunteers trained in medicine
➢ Training and capacity building: operating with fewer volunteers, recording volunteer trainings, engaging volunteers virtually

DEI in volunteer management

➢ Overrepresentation of volunteers among more privileged groups
➢ Training and capacity building: engaging diverse volunteers (e.g., updating recruitment language)
➢ A DEI lens, but not always a specific
Challenges

- Low training participation
- Measuring volunteer retention
- Networking opportunities
- Training on data collection and management
- Lack of DEI in Service Enterprise
Preliminary Outcomes

- Creation of volunteer management networks
- Expanded reach
- Improved volunteer onboarding
- Better alignment of volunteers to needs
- Leader in the county or state
- Approachability of Service Enterprise
- Improved volunteer descriptions
- Continued training opportunities
- Qualification for larger grants
Volunteer Management Models Identified in the Study

- Service Enterprise
- Stanford Pathways
- Human Resource Management
Kayla Paulson
Service Enterprise Program Administrator, AL!VE
Service Enterprise
National Accreditation in Strategic Volunteer Engagement

Great way to amplify AmeriCorps programming & funding

- **Senior Corps**: Help stations create more impactful opportunities, strengthen community engagement, and be able to report hours, outputs, & outcomes
- **AmeriCorps**: Strengthen organization’s ability to recruit, train, and supervise members in addition to bringing in volunteers to amplify and supplement AmeriCorps’ efforts
- **VGF**: Change management program that focuses on building an organization’s capacity to engage volunteers (need I say more?)

Kayla Paulson, CVA
Experienced:
- RSVP Director
- Interim AmeriCorps Director
- VGF Volunteer Center Leader
Service Enterprise
National Accreditation in Strategic Volunteer Engagement

**Service Enterprises (Organizations)**
Fundamentally leverage volunteers and their skills throughout the organization to achieve its social mission.

**Service Enterprise Program**
Cross-functional multi-level organization team solely focused on improving the way they leverage the skills, time, and talents of volunteers.

**SE Training & Implementation Hubs**
Partners across the nation that deliver the SE program by providing training, coaching, and facilitating change with a cohort of organizations.
Service Enterprise Program

Guiding Principles

Volunteer Ecosystem  Make it Core  True Community Needs  Need to Invest  DEAI
Service Enterprise Program
Key Outcomes & Findings

• All organizational capacities are **significantly and markedly stronger** for nonprofits with a strong volunteer management model

• **Significantly better led and managed**

• **Significantly more adaptable, sustainable and capable of going to scale**

• Operating as a Service Enterprise requires strong and **well-developed human resources management practices**

• Are equally as effective as their peers without volunteers but at almost **half the median budget**
# How Service Enterprise Works for Orgs.

Transforming Organizations to Strategically Engage Volunteers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Enterprise Elements</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteer Engagement 101 Training Series</strong></td>
<td>Prepares organizations by training individuals in volunteer engagement core competencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Change Management Program</strong></td>
<td>Organization transformational process bringing a cross-functional multi-level team together for true cultural change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diagnostic &amp; Debrief</strong></td>
<td>SE trainers facilitate a debrief conversation about research-based report &amp; specific recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Network</strong></td>
<td>Service Enterprise Training &amp; Implementation Hubs connect regularly sharing resources, problem-solving, and connecting organizations across the nation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuous Learning &amp; Improvement</strong></td>
<td>AL!VE offers Academies &amp; a Community of Practice that is exclusive to Service Enterprise organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Custom Training &amp; Coaching</strong></td>
<td>Adaptive to the needs of the organization and provides the ability to meet them where they are.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Become an Implementation & Training Hub: 
Join the Service Enterprise Movement
Maximize Your Resources with a Proven & Established Program

Plug & Play Program Model with Curriculum

• Volunteer Engagement Training Program
• Diagnostic & Debrief
• Service Enterprise curriculum
• Training & coaching topics with resources

Training & Technical Assistance for Hubs

• Marketing & communication support
• National network with monthly training
• Regular train the trainer opportunities
• And more
Putting the Recommendations Into Action
Volunteer Recruitment & Retention Strategies

✓ Clear & impactful volunteer position descriptions
✓ Low-barrier & low-commitment opportunities as points of entry
✓ Diversified opportunities to meet people where they are
✓ Job-crafted roles for mutual benefit
✓ Communicate & celebrate how volunteer efforts make a difference
✓ Demonstrate the contributions & value volunteers bring
Putting the Recommendations Into Action
Engaging Diverse Volunteers

- Rethink the V-word
- Do WITH not FOR
- Build volunteer ladders
- Ask what the barriers are
- Bust down barriers with volunteers & partnerships
- Create an inclusive culture of belonging
Putting the Recommendations Into Action
Sustainable, Adaptable & Scalable

• Epidemics (COVID)
• National Disasters (Derecho/Hurricane)
• Recession
Putting the Recommendations Into Action
Promising Practices & Training

- Service Enterprise is available to not-for-profits, government entities, and proprietary health organizations
- Available across the nation
- Email ServiceEnterprise@volunteeralive.org to connect with your Implementation & Training Hub or to become one
Michelle Raymer
Senior Volunteer Engagement Officer,
Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service
About Volunteer Iowa

**Mission:**
To improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering

**Vision:**
To create an Iowa where all citizens are empowered through service to meet community challenges and make lives better.
About Volunteer Iowa

**Development: Demand for Volunteers**
- Developing New Service Opportunities
- Improving Existing Services and Programs

**Connection**
- Building Iowa’s Volunteer Infrastructure
- Expanding Iowa’s Volunteer Base
- Building a Culture and Climate for Service
- Volunteer Promotion and Recognition
- Volunteer and National Service Recruitment

**Engagement: Supply of Volunteers**
Iowa VGF Activities

• Volunteer Center Subgrants
• Statewide Training and Resources
• Service Enterprise
• Get Connected
• Disaster Response
• City Volunteer Engagement Initiative
• Youth Volunteering
Service Enterprise in Iowa

Service Enterprise Hub

Volunteer Iowa

Service Enterprise Sub-hubs

Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley

United Way of Wapello County
Service Enterprise in Iowa

- Over 70 certified Service Enterprises
- Shift in organizational culture
- Increase in volunteers
- Increase in skilled volunteers
- Volunteer Engagement Professional retention
- Strengthened network of local leaders
Lisl Hacker
Director of Training and TA, Massachusetts Service Alliance
We expand volunteerism and service in Massachusetts by providing individuals and organizations with funding, training, and support, which enables them to strengthen communities and make our Commonwealth a better place to live.

We are attuned to the Commonwealth’s current needs, strategically harnessing service members and volunteers to respond to emerging issues affecting Massachusetts residents and developing programs that across the state to address those areas. We support organizations with varying missions to increase volunteerism and service in all areas of critical need.
Through the support of the Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) since 2010, the Massachusetts Service Alliance has successfully leveraged thousands of volunteers by supporting volunteer opportunities in Massachusetts. MSA is undertaking a comprehensive approach that will enhance and build upon past VGF efforts to build the capacity of organizations in the Commonwealth to more effectively engage volunteers. MSA supports the volunteer sector through:

- **Service Enterprise Initiative** – supported over 120 organizations and certified 75%
- **Youth Development Volunteer Initiative Grants** to nonprofits to better engage volunteers in youth development programming
- **MA Conference on Service & Volunteerism** - statewide with between 300-400 attendees
- **Fall and Spring Trainings** on effective volunteer management practices
- **COVID-19 Resiliency/Recovery Grants** aimed to support volunteer programming needs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
Certified and Participating Agencies in Massachusetts

- 11 Agencies, 4 Certified Agencies
- 10 Agencies, 5 Certified Agencies
- 25 Agencies, 17 Certified Agencies
- 17 Agencies, 6 Certified Agencies
- 24 Agencies, 18 Certified Agencies
- 21 Agencies, 14 Certified Agencies

Total Agencies: 113
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE GRANT

Proposals Received

Proposals Funded
COVID RESILIENCY/RECOVERY GRANTS
COVID RESILIENCY/RECOVERY GRANTS - ORG OPERATING BUDGETS

- 3 orgs < $75,000
- 13 orgs < $500,000
- 18 orgs < $1 million

*All different mission areas
ENTRY POINT INTO WORK WITH THE COMMISSION

Building Volunteer Management Capacity

Building Capacity to Support Corps Member

Commonwealth Corps/VISTA Sponsor/Host Site

Service Enterprise/Mini-Grant Recipient

Support full Corps of members

*AmeriCorps Program

*See the same trajectory with potential member recruitment and development
Shane Dermanjian, MPP
Research Analyst, AmeriCorps
The AmeriCorps Member Exit Survey

• AmeriCorps members take the **Member Exit Survey** (MES) upon exiting the program – over 350,000 responses since 2015

• Early-exiters and those that finish service both take the survey
  • Members take the survey as many times as they serve

• 75-80% of members in a given fiscal year complete the MES

• MES gauges members' experiences, feelings, sentiment, attitudes – helps monitor progress towards agency's strategic goals around member development
The MES captures the AmeriCorps Member Theory of Change (TOC)

**Vision:**
- Creation of empowered and prepared citizens
- More civically engaged
- Will work to strengthen their communities
- Dedicated to improving the lives of those in their community

**Four Pathways to Achieving Vision:**
- Participants develop along four pathways essential in developing empowerment and preparation necessary to be a change-oriented, active community member
MES Pathways

- Cultural Competency
- Civic Engagement
- Life and Career Skills
- “Getting Things Done”
Civic Engagement in the MES (2017 – 2021)

- **Increased community engagement:** most members across all programs reported a higher likelihood of participating and volunteering in their communities after having served in AmeriCorps, though there was a slight decrease amongst all members from 2020 to 2021.

- **Increased frequency of discussing sociopolitical issues:** starting in 2019, all members reported a decrease in how often they discussed and linked larger political, social, local, or national issues to their communities compared to previous years, although levels increased past pre-2019 levels starting in 2020.

- **High levels of attachment and obligation to their community:** the majority of ASN and VISTA members expressed a strong personal attachment to their community from 2017 through 2021.

- **High levels of member confidence to adequately address community concerns:** most members felt they could do something about a problem in their community by:
  - creating plans
  - getting others to care about the problem
  - organizing meetings
  - expressing one’s views in front of a group
  - contacting elected officials
Civic Engagement in the MES (2017 – 2021)

AmeriCorps members aged 18-29 vote in presidential elections more than the general population of the same age.
Bridging Differences in the MES (2016-2020)

How do AmeriCorps members bridge differences?

On surveys taken between 2016 - 2020, the vast majority of departing AmeriCorps members agreed that they:

- Enjoy exploring differences between co-workers and/or friends from different cultures and backgrounds: 93%
- Respect the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds: 97%
- Enjoy interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds: 96%
- Feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds: 93%
Members report positive outcomes regardless of service completion.

20) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements – participating in AmeriCorps was a worthwhile experience in terms of furthering:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree or Agree</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finished</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did not Finish</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>76%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Difference</strong></td>
<td><strong>21%</strong></td>
<td><strong>20%</strong></td>
<td><strong>20%</strong></td>
<td><strong>6%</strong></td>
<td><strong>9%</strong></td>
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<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not Finish</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Difference</strong></td>
<td><strong>19%</strong></td>
<td><strong>18%</strong></td>
<td><strong>18%</strong></td>
<td><strong>7%</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not Finish</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Difference</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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Q & A Panel Discussion:

- Shane Dermanjian, MPP, Research Analyst, AmeriCorps
- Lisl Hacker, Director of Training and TA, Massachusetts Service Alliance
- Kayla Paulson, Service Enterprise Program Administrator, AL!VE
- Michelle Raymer, Senior Volunteer Engagement Officer, Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service
- Samantha Spinney, PhD, Principal Investigator of Volunteer Generation Fund Evaluation, ICF
- Emily Stock, Project Manager for Volunteer Initiatives, AmeriCorps
Thank you for attending today’s webinar

The recording and support materials will be provided in the next two weeks at:


To inquire about the work presented in this webinar, please reach out to Evaluation@cns.gov

Join us on 6/22/2023 from 12:30 to 2:30pm for the next webinar in this series

Double Trouble: Reigniting Civic Engagement through Pandemics and Disasters

Registration is available now on the AmeriCorps Impact and Evidence Webinar Page