



## CASE STUDY

# Volunteer Generation Fund Evaluation: UServeUtah



## BUNDLED EVALUATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

The Utah state service commission, the Utah Commission on Service & Volunteerism (UServeUtah), participated in the AmeriCorps Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) evaluation through several different phases, including focus groups/interviews with commission staff, program implementers, program beneficiaries, and a program beneficiaries survey.<sup>1,2</sup> In addition to the evaluation data collection activities noted, the following case study brief incorporates additional data sources from VGF grant applications and progress reports and longitudinal data from the AmeriCorps Current Population Survey Civic Engagement and Volunteering Supplement. Exhibit 1 provides an overview of each of the data sources that were used to inform the following brief.

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<sup>1</sup> The VGF grantee, UServeUtah, also served as the primary program implementer for VGF programming and services.

<sup>2</sup> For the Volunteer Management Training & Capacity Building Survey, the state service commission had a 19 percent response rate with a total of 75 individual respondents representing 63 unique organizations.

**EXHIBIT 1.—Overview of data sources**

Data Source	Participant Count	Date Collected
Grant Application	–	May 2020
AmeriCorps Current Population Survey Civic Engagement and Volunteering Supplements	–	September 2017, 2019, and 2021
FY2020 and FY2021 VGF Progress Reports	–	December 2020 and 2021
Project Director Interview – UServeUtah	1	March 2022
Program Implementer Interview – UServeUtah	3	October 2022
Beneficiaries Focus Group – Community Engagement Grant	5	October 2022
Beneficiaries Focus Group – Volunteer Management Training	4	October 2022
Beneficiaries Focus Group – Volunteer Programming for Maximum Impact	2	October 2022
Beneficiaries Focus Group – Youth Council	1	October 2022
Volunteer Management Training & Capacity Building Survey	57	April 2022
Final Commission Interview – UServeUtah	1	August 2023

## Overview of Grant Structure and Goals

UServeUtah is the central coordinating body for volunteerism in the state of Utah, which receives the VGF grant from AmeriCorps. According to UServeUtah, the broad goals of the grant are to expand and implement Stanford University’s Pathways of Public Service and Civic Engagement framework to engage nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individuals in increasing their impact in the community through volunteerism.<sup>3</sup> UServeUtah set out to accomplish these goals through the incorporation of the pathways framework in:

1. A suite of training courses for nonprofits and businesses to reimagine their volunteer practices;
2. Capacity building and social change mentorship for youth; and
3. Community engagement grants focused on creating and realizing sustainable impact for a community.

UServeUtah is additionally incorporating the framework through their Community Engagement Pathways Profile Tool. The broad implementation, reach, and subsequent impacts of these activities are allowed by the VGF grant.

<sup>3</sup> The Stanford University Pathways of Public Service and Civic Engagement is a framework/approach to community engagement—in the broad sense. This model is primarily used in higher education. It conceptualizes community engagement through six pathways -- direct service is one of those pathways but other pathways include topics such as community organizing and philanthropy. For information, visit: <https://haas.stanford.edu/about/our-approach/pathways-public-service-and-civic-engagement#:~:text=The%20Pathways%20of%20Public%20Service,working%20toward%20the%20common%20good.>

The Pathways of Public Service and Civic Engagement framework is an approach to community engagement developed by Stanford University that is primarily used in higher education. UServeUtah is the only non-higher education institution on their working board and development team to implement this framework. The commission was given permission to adopt and modify the framework. The framework includes six pathways, including direct service, social entrepreneurship, corporate social responsibility, community engaged learning and research, policy and governance, and philanthropy and community organizing/activism.

An overview of each key initiative supporting these objectives is included below, as described by UServeUtah.

## Volunteer Management Training Suite

UServeUtah currently offers two primary in-house training courses funded through VGF, with multiple others in development, as well as an Active Engagement Retreat training experience. UServeUtah staff described aspects of the trainings as being similar to the Service Enterprise model for volunteer management, but also with key differences. The curricula were developed in 2009 using consultant input. As of fall 2022, UServeUtah reported training slightly under 300 organizations and over 300 individuals through their fiscal year (FY)2020 VGF grant. The types of organizations who participate in training are wide-ranging and include nonprofits, government entities, community organizations, and religious organizations—anyone who engages with or uses volunteers is invited. Trainings are delivered by UServeUtah staff as well as partners, including nonprofit leaders, commissioners, and AmeriCorps program directors.

- Recruitment for trainings is done through outreach across social media, with existing partners and corporate partners that have volunteer programs. Details on the specific trainings being used and those under development are as follows:
- **Volunteer Management Training (VMT)**. Originally developed in 2010, the VMT is for individuals, including volunteer managers, executives, or anyone else with day-to-day responsibilities with volunteers. The commission conducts approximately three of these trainings per year in areas across Utah. As part of the training, organizations that meet certain requirements receive a certification from UServeUtah. To obtain the certificate, trainees receive a prediagnostic survey to see what their skill levels were before training, and later they complete another survey 6 months after the training; if they have shown improvement, they receive the certificate.
- **Volunteer Programming for Maximum Impact (VPMI)**. This training, hosted once per year, is focused on change management for organizations, as opposed to the VMT, which is focused on individual development. VPMI was created after UServeUtah heard feedback from organizations that had staff members that took the VMT training but left their organizations, effectively taking their knowledge with them. The VPMI training therefore changes volunteer management systems and processes within organizations to make effects larger than any one staff member. Usually, 20 organizations participate in VPMI. Before the trainings, the commission conducts one-on-one consultations with organizations, at which point they can receive a bronze, silver, or gold certificate based on their level of competency with volunteer management. The training consists of 2 full days of training with 8 training modules. After the training is complete, organizations hold a meeting with UServeUtah staff to select among the 12 training elements to focus on improvement in the future. Organizations then can gather evidence demonstrating improvement in the elements they selected, and after a

### A Note on Program Beneficiaries

In the context of this case study, “program beneficiaries” include organizations and participants that took part in UServeUtah’s initiatives, including Volunteer Management Training, Volunteer Programming for Maximum Impact training, retreats, Community Engagement grant, and youth council.

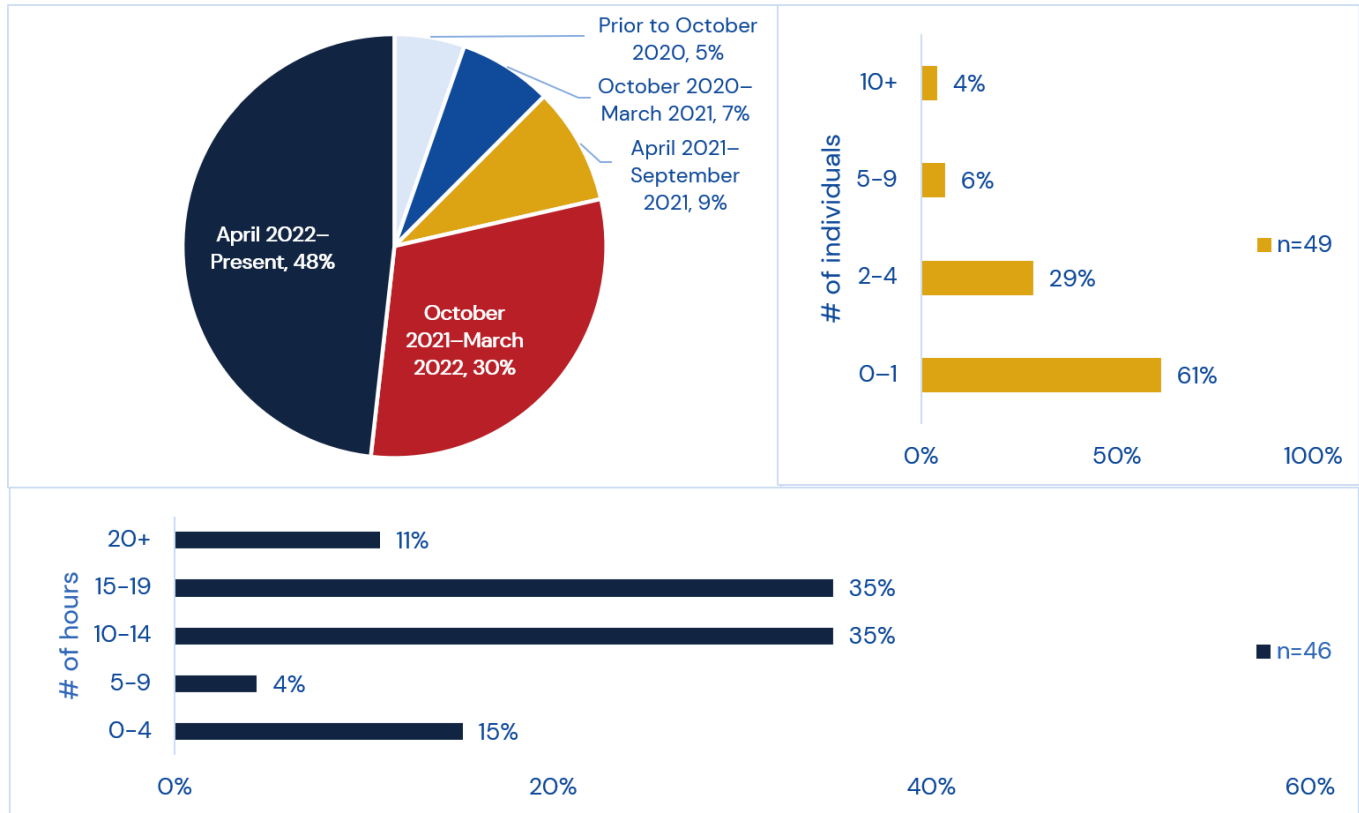
review, they can receive a certificate for the next 5 years. Organizations can also submit evidence to upgrade their certificate if it is lower than gold level. The training is a larger commitment for an organization than the VMT, as it is more expensive and requires more staff members to participate, and for longer.

- **Training Courses Under Development.** The commission hired a consultant who developed the first iteration of the VMT curriculum to develop two new training courses—one for nonprofit executives and another for businesses and for-profit organizations. Both are estimated to take approximately 6 months, with a 1-day-per-month commitment. The Nonprofit Executive Training is aimed at addressing and providing training to nonprofit executives and upper-level management, while the Business/For-Profit Training is focused on how to train businesses and for-profit organizations on how to collaborate with nonprofits most effectively.
- **Active Engagement Retreat.** Another training component supported through their VGF grant is UServeUtah's Active Engagement Retreat, also considered one of their youth initiatives (defined as activities supporting those from ages 18 to 30). This retreat, usually performed in person, includes AmeriCorps members, higher education students, early professionals, and others, and it is a training component specific to providing resources and knowledge/awareness for youth about community engagement. The VGF grant supports retreat materials and provides financial assistance for presenters and small group facilitators. VGF has also helped support some curriculum modifications. The retreat includes a pre- and post-survey similar to the one performed in the VMT training to assess overall knowledge, as well as overall satisfaction. The retreat curriculum includes the development of action goals, with follow-ups conducted on these goals after 1 month, 3 months, and 6 months following the retreat.

In January 2023, ICF worked with UServeUtah to develop and administer a survey regarding volunteer management training and capacity building activities provided by UServeUtah. Most of the respondents were volunteer managers/coordinators (43 percent), however the respondents also included Youth Council members (16 percent); executive directors/CEOs/presidents (4 percent); and others (32 percent), including educators, health specialists, and "others" (as written in by respondents). Approximately two-thirds (62 percent) were from organizations that engaged 10 or more volunteers on average per month (the remaining 38 percent reported engaging fewer than 10 volunteers per month). Over three-quarters (76 percent) of respondents reported participating in one or more UServeUtah training activities, including the VMT, VPMT, or the Active Engagement Retreat. A plurality of respondents (38 percent) reported that fewer than 10 people volunteer for their organizations on average; in addition, 17 percent reported that 10–20 people volunteer monthly, 12 percent reported that 21–30 volunteers volunteer monthly, and 34 percent reported that 31 or more people volunteer monthly.

As shown in exhibit 2, the time in which survey respondents reported first participating in a UServeUtah training varied; 5 percent of respondents noted their organization first participated prior to October 2020, while 48 percent noted they did not first participate until more recently (April 2022–Present). Since October 2020, the majority (61 percent) of survey respondents noted that 0–1 individuals from their organization participated in a training or capacity building activity through VGF. The majority (81 percent) of respondents participated in more than 10 hours of volunteer management training.

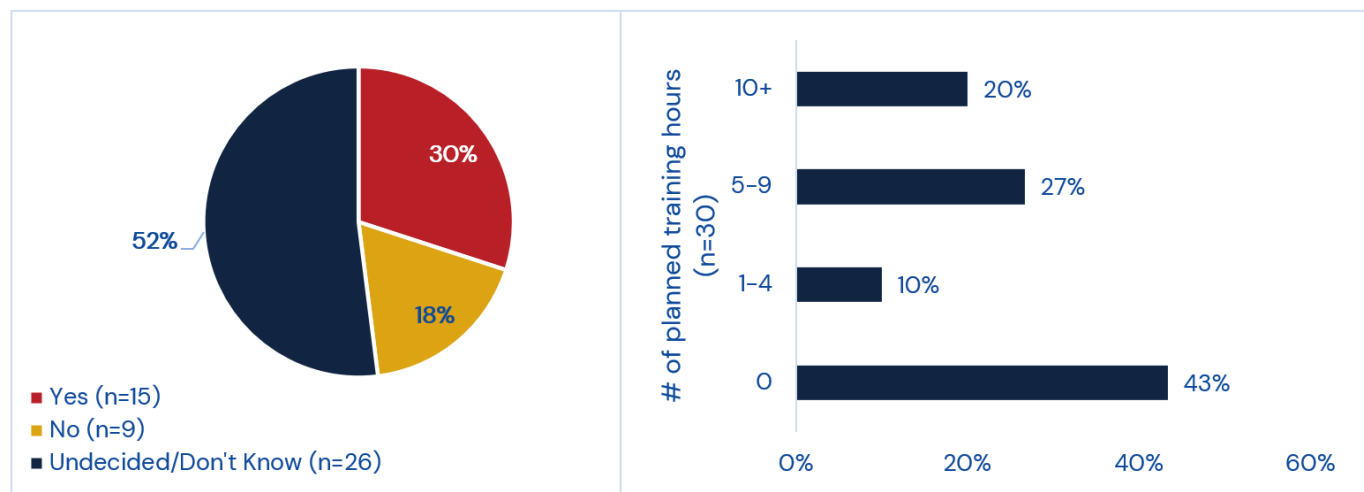
**EXHIBIT 2.—Organization’s participation time frame, range and number of hours**



Source: Volunteer Management Training & Capacity Building Survey administered in January 2023.

As grant programming continued following the data collection, survey participants were also asked to report on the organizations’ plans for additional training. Exhibit 3 shows that 30 percent of respondents reported they intended to complete additional training and 52 percent were undecided. In addition, nearly half (47 percent) of survey respondents indicated they planned to complete 5 or more additional hours of training.

**EXHIBIT 3.—Organizational plans for additional training and additional planned hours**



Source: Volunteer Management Training & Capacity Building Survey administered in January 2023.

## Youth Initiatives

Beyond trainings, UServeUtah supports two key youth initiatives, the Youth Council and a high school honors program. The Youth Council is comprised of high school and college students who represent all geographic regions of Utah. Historically, there was a single council for both high school and college students, however there are now two separate councils for each group. These councils form as annual cohorts aligned to the academic year. Students receive monthly training from UServeUtah's VGF team, with subjects including logic models, needs assessments, stakeholders, and finding those who already exist within communities to address issues.

As a group, Youth Council members engage in a research project to better understand the current landscape of youth volunteerism in the state. Members also conduct a capstone project in their geographic region, often partnering with local nonprofits or educational institutions. Example capstone projects included connecting recent Afghan refugees to local communities in Utah or creating a neuroscience fair at an elementary school.

In addition, the commission piloted a high school volunteer recognition award in the 2022–2023 academic year. Originally, a statewide rollout was planned for academic year 2023–2024, but it is now on pause dependent on further VGF grant funding, with the exception of students in the pilot program, who the commission plans to continue to work with through their graduation.

## Community Engagement Grants

UServeUtah also uses their VGF grant to fund 1-year Community Engagement Grants, supporting nonprofits and public entities, such as public universities, with the aim of increasing Utahans' awareness and/or participation in community and civic engagement. The commission provided 14 awards during the 2021–2022 project period, worth roughly \$200,000 total, using both VGF and state funding.

In addition to award monies, the commission also provides two educational sessions for awardees: Logic Models & Tracking Outcomes and Community Engagement Pathways. Awardees must also participate in midyear check-ins with the commission and create a final report.

## Community Engagement Pathways Profile Tool

The commission hired a VGF consultant and created a public tool/assessment that allows the Utah public to find their "pathway" (which of the Six pathways best fits them). The results of this assessment include a toolkit on how to make sense of or utilize that pathway. The consultant conducted a focus group with 800 people who used the tool and provided feedback. A UServeUtah staff member described the tool, saying...

*"It indicates through an online assessment what type of person they are. Are they a leader, an elected official, on the city council, a participant that they can lend a signature, a worker bee? [It] lists out all these different ways they can engage. But then it also gets into what are your issues, what are your passions? What are the issues of public concern that have a sticking point for you."*

The tool entered a soft launch on January 1, 2022, with a formal launch in April 2022 to coincide with National Volunteer Month. As part of the launch, the governor of Utah created a public service announcement video that was embedded in an email to all 25,000 Utah state employees encouraging them to use the new tool.

No participants interviewed from either VMT or VPML trainings recalled using the pathways profile, but a member of the Youth Council did recall using the tool to help determine their goals. However, commission staff described how they have widely rolled out the pathways profile and now include it in all trainings. UServeUtah is currently the only state service commission with this toolkit in public use. However, staff described how they have presented the pathways profile to a national conference, where it received

significant interest. The commission intends to develop this kit for use by other states; at the moment, however, development has been paused due to a lack of further funding.

## Recent Volunteerism Trends in Utah and Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

According to the 2021 AmeriCorps Current Population Survey Civic Engagement and Volunteering Supplement, 40.7 percent of Utah residents formally volunteered through an organization in 2021. This was 28.4 percentage points higher than the national rate of 23.2 percent, but also 8.8 percentage points lower than Utah's pre-pandemic rate of 49.5 percent in 2019, and 9.3 percentage points lower than its 2017 rate of 50.0 percent.

As in other states, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic had profound impacts on volunteerism in general as well as volunteer training specifically. Program implementer staff reported a number of challenges their recipients experienced during the pandemic, including extra strain on staff who were often already stretched thin, volunteerism decreasing generally, and funding sources drying up. UServeUtah reported incorporating some COVID-specific training, such as on how to engage volunteers remotely and what policies and practices to implement at any given time based on regulations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. UServeUtah also provided an open forum about responding to the pandemic, which was attended by up to 250 participants. The pandemic also taught the commission, and the state government generally, how to quickly switch to online services if the situation requires it.

Training participants noted significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on volunteer programs. One organization that participated in VPMI only started to accept volunteers again in the first half of 2022, while another started their volunteer plan because they needed more support after the onset of the pandemic. A participant in the VMT that had volunteers working at multiple locations found it challenging to provide more than virtual support to them and encountered difficulties when certain sites would have outbreaks of the virus or would stop accepting volunteers suddenly. A Youth Council member interviewed by ICF reported virtual participation on the council during the pandemic; they found it easy to adapt to working on Zoom, but also noticed difficulty focusing and felt that they didn't form relationships with other members of the council.

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Commission staff interviewed described that both VMI and VPMI have a module about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), but participant feedback suggested the commission increase DEI's presence. As of a fall 2022 interview, UServeUtah staff were expanding that module and being strategic about implementing DEI aspects into every other module, such as including training on making recruitment accessible and reducing language barriers for volunteers, sharing:

*We've added a piece in every element [of our program]... we wanted to make sure that it wasn't just a one-off. It wasn't thrown in there as lip service but it was something that was strategically placed in every single module.*

Participants in the VMI and VPMI training courses noted challenges they experienced in recruiting and retaining diverse volunteers in their organizations. One focused on how being able to volunteer at all is a privilege that not all can participate in, and that even though their organization targets diverse groups of people it is hard to get a diverse group of volunteers to show up. A second participant echoed this, noting how volunteerism often requires participants to take off work and provide their own transportation, which limits possible participation. Another finds it difficult to focus on DEI efforts because they currently don't have a dedicated volunteer coordinator and therefore don't have the time or staff capacity to develop a strategy to

do so. The nature of their organization also requires volunteers to work between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., and the groups who can take the time to do so are limited.

When asked to recall strategies to recruit or retain diverse volunteers, VMT and VPMI participants highlighted a few different strategies. One participant recalled a training discussing how to maximize inclusion in recruitment messaging. Another remembered learning how to recruit volunteers across different generations.

The Youth Council participant interviewed did not find the council to be particularly racially or ethnically diverse, which they noted reflected the overall racial homogeneity of the state, though they did describe the council as being geographically diverse—with members from across Utah—as well as diverse in terms of the type of project each council member was working on. They also noted how participation in the council provides members with a stipend to supplement the opportunity cost of not working, though the participant did not know if that supplement had affected diversity yet.

## Strategies Used and/or Learned

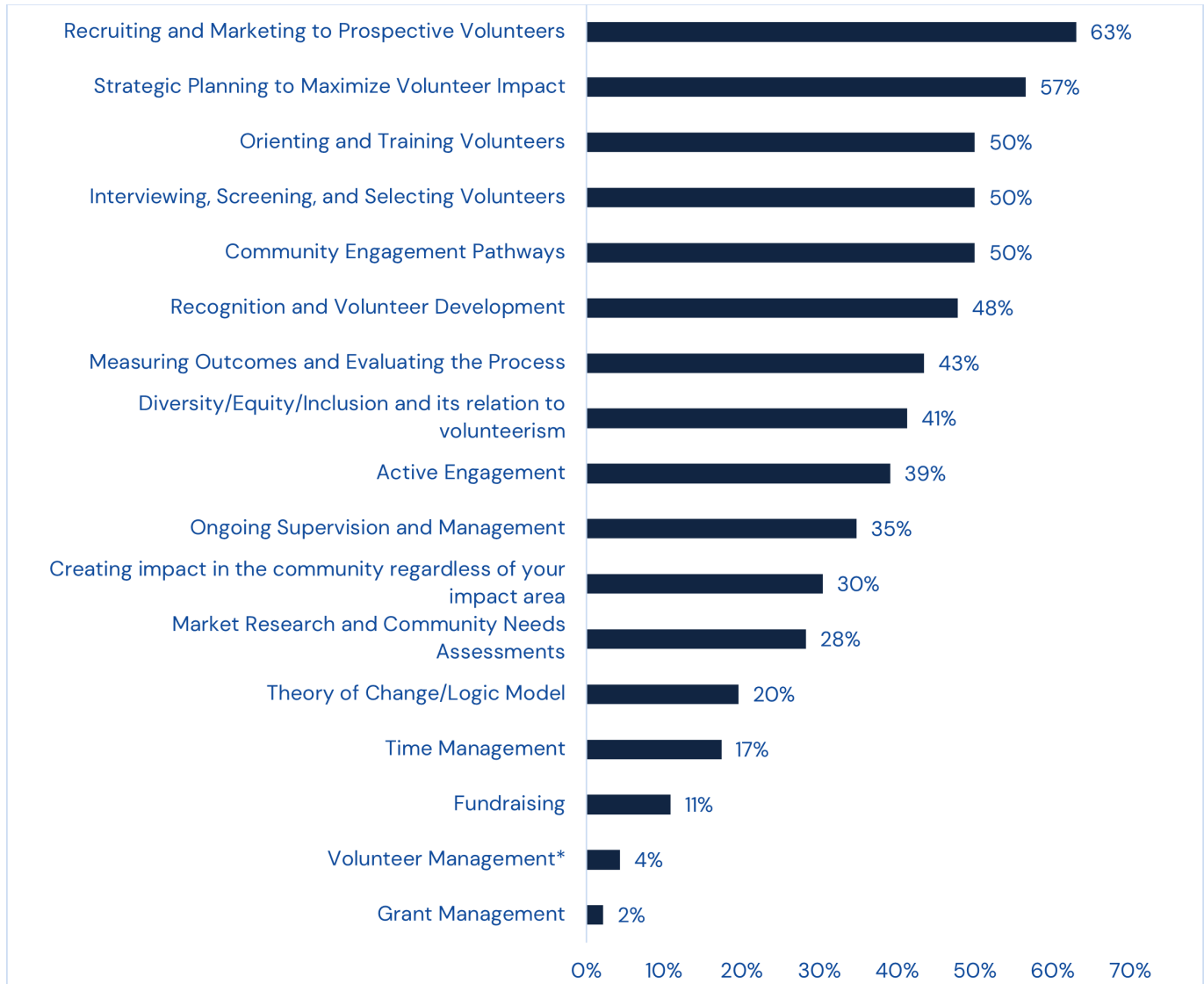
VMT and VPMI participants described during site visits several volunteer management strategies they learned during training sessions, including the following:

- **Segmenting Out Volunteers.** Participants learned to figure out in what capacity different groups can volunteer, and then learned how to make sure those volunteers are targeted.
- **Developing Clear Volunteer Job Descriptions.** Making volunteers aware of what tasks they are and are not expected to perform. This allows volunteers to identify which roles they are interested in, as well.
- **Recognizing Volunteers.** To drive volunteer retention, making sure volunteers are recognized for their efforts. Examples include tracking when volunteers began volunteering and giving them small gifts at certain thresholds.
- **Identifying Volunteer Motivations.** This includes tracking why volunteers are motivated to volunteer with your organization through methods such as surveys, and seeing how those motivations change over time.
- **Identifying the Return on Investment for Volunteers.** Measuring the impact of volunteers on an organization, including monetarily, to share with staff, leaders, and volunteers.
- **Aiming to Attract Long-Term Volunteers.** One organization had been only aiming to attract volunteers for one-time opportunities, and learned to instead focus on retaining volunteers through appeals to the mission of the organization.
- **Conducting Regular Evaluations.** Regularly evaluating their program to see what is working and what could be improved.
- **Mutual Selection Process.** The realization that volunteer recruitment is as much selection for volunteers about what organizations they want to spend their time on as it is organizations identifying what volunteers they are looking for.
- **Following up.** After reaching out to recruit volunteers, following up to see if they're still interested.
- **Attracting Volunteers Across Generations.** Volunteers learned different motivations and practices to attract volunteers of various ages.
- **Inclusion in Messaging.** One volunteer recalled learning inclusive recruitment messaging.

Across survey respondents, there was a wide variation in the types of practices respondents noted receiving training on through UServeUtah's training and capacity building activities. The most frequently reported training practices included Recruiting and Marketing to Prospective Volunteers (63 percent) and Strategic Planning to Maximize Volunteer Impact (57 percent). Exhibit 4 provides additional details on the types of practices survey respondents reported learning about through training activities.



**EXHIBIT 4.—Volunteer management practices learned about in trainings (n=46)**

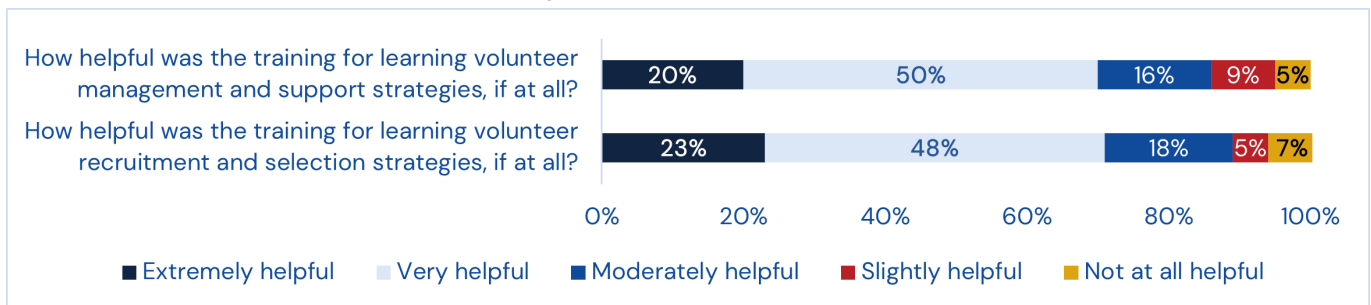


Source: Volunteer Management Training & Capacity Building Survey collected in January 2023.

\*This survey question originally contained an “Other” response with a write-in option. The two participants who answered “Other” both wrote in “Volunteer Management.”

Over two-thirds of survey respondents reported that the trainings were very or extremely helpful for learning volunteer management and support strategies (70 percent), and recruitment and selection strategies (71 percent), as seen in exhibit 5.

**EXHIBIT 5.—Reported helpfulness of training (n=44)**



Source: Volunteer Management Training & Capacity Building Survey collected in January 2023.

## Collecting and Tracking Data

UServeUtah requires participants across trainings, its grant program, and in the Youth Council to collect data on performance indicators. For example, the VMT and VPMI both require participants to provide evidence as part of receiving a certificate. The VMT as well as the Active Engagement Retreat administer a pre- and post-survey as part of the training experience. Finally, Community Engagement Grant recipients are required to submit an annual report as part of their grant.

VMT and VPMI participants also noted multiple types of volunteer data their organizations collect from volunteers. The amount of data collected varied: one VPMI participant currently collects demographic data, availability, records of service, and driver's license information, while another collects much fewer data due to the lack of a robust volunteer tracking system. Organizations also reported collecting hours, participation numbers at classes and events, satisfaction surveys, and qualitative data toward key performance indicators. A VMT participant noted how they use their historical data to demonstrate impact to volunteers in order to make volunteers feel valued and improve their retention.

## Outcomes

### UServeUtah's Outcomes

UServeUtah staff were asked to reflect on their program's biggest successes and challenges since October 2020. The largest challenge overall, according to staff, has been responding to the pandemic. UServeUtah applied for this grant just before the onset of COVID-19, and they experienced some challenges pivoting to virtual services, but from their perspective, were mostly successful in this transition. From the fall of 2020 through the end of 2022, participation numbers were below pre-COVID levels. Engagement during virtual sessions was down, and staff had difficulty convincing trainees to actively participate through turning on webcams. In the transition away from virtual sessions, UServeUtah has also seen some difficulty getting participation at in-person trainings, as participants have been skeptical of the safety and became used to the convenience that Zoom trainings offered. However, staff have noted that since January of 2023 numbers have rebounded and participation levels in all VGF activities are back to pre-COVID numbers or beyond, with some trainings fully selling out.

An additional challenge is the difficulty staff find in writing applications for grants such as VGF that require them to innovate, when from UServeUtah's perspective, their needs are to obtain sustained funds that continue programs in the same forms they've existed in. Just three state service commissions were awarded in the last funding notification (in 2023 at time of writing), and the VGF program generally seems to be shifting away from state service commissions and toward nonprofits. UServeUtah staff shared their perspective that impactful initiatives like theirs take time to build, and many are just gaining traction now—right as they will have to sunset 3 years after they were initially awarded.

In terms of successes, staff were satisfied with their impact across programs and populations, even if that success is difficult to measure. One staff member compared programs to dropping pebbles in a body of water, where their program creates ripples that move far away from view, but still have an effect on others. Staff members highlighted the success of their Community Engagement Grant program, where the large sum of grant money given out has large and measurable impacts on grantees. For example, staff shared the example of the Better Utah Institute, which used grant money to develop a nonpartisan online tool devoted to increasing political participation in the state. Staff also highlighted the impacts of their various youth initiatives, in particular, the Youth Council, where students are given the opportunity to work on passion projects for multiple months and develop their skills. However, staff also qualified these successes by again

citing the lack of sustained funding from VGF, as the improvements highlighted here, such as enhancements to training to build VGF into all modules, will likely sunset after the loss of funding.

## Program Beneficiaries' Outcomes

Program beneficiaries across VMT, VPMI, the Community Engagement Grant, and the Youth Council reflected on the outcomes of programs on them and their organizations.

### VMT

VMT participants highlighted numerous positive aspects of their experiences with training. Specifically, participants described:

- VMT as laying a positive foundation for volunteer management skills, which they could use in future to expand their skills;
- How they had learned the importance of reflecting on and becoming mindful of the volunteer experience to better serve them;
- How they found their management and utilization of volunteers to now be defter and more efficient; and
- The value of networking opportunities with other volunteer managers and the value that VMT offers as a foundational training for VPMI.

VMT trainees who ICF spoke with all reported receiving a certification at the end of their process, and did not offer any major suggestions for improvement. One participant in particular shared how their organization was voted the second-best place to volunteer in southern Utah, which they attributed to the training they received with the UServeUtah VMT.

### VPMI

VPMI participants shared many successes and helpful aspects as a result of their participation in training, listed here.

- Participants began incorporating statements of need, job descriptions, and making organizational charts available for volunteers.
- Multiple organizations began to step up their volunteer recognition as well as clarifying their messaging to volunteers about their roles and responsibilities.
- One organization that began with a very poor orientation for volunteers clarified their training immensely as a result of training and began to make it much easier for volunteers to understand who to go to with questions.
- Many participants at the time of the interview had plans in place to integrate volunteer position descriptions in their messaging and ways to target new volunteer populations they hadn't identified before.
- A volunteer manager felt that training made them equipped to rely on volunteers for more tasks, sharing that the training has increased their capacity by providing "ideas for me to be like, 'Okay, I don't need to do this all alone. I can rely on volunteers as well do to all sorts of jobs for us.'"

Participants liked multiple aspects of the structure of the training itself. VPMI participants received physical booklets with lessons, and participants reported referencing those lessons often. They also enjoyed the six-module framework of training, as well as the clear roadmap of how to implement a volunteer program from start to finish. The training itself was also seen as very engaging, as was being able to network with other volunteer managers and share ideas. Participants also highlighted the affordability of trainings as a huge benefit.

VPMI participants also shared a few recommendations for improvement and additional supports they needed. VPMI participants who had also attended VMT seemed to be a step ahead of others who had not, and some of the latter wished for more support to align the two groups. Some elements of the training booklet were seen as requiring more detail. Additionally, the time required to obtain certification levels was seen by some participants as burdensome with their otherwise busy schedule. Additional training elements wanted by participants included database management, gaining staff buy-in, and being able to retain an ongoing community of training participants.

### Community Engagement Grant

Grantees found the program to be very positively impactful for their organizations. Grantees highlighted the value of UServeUtah’s pipeline to existing volunteers, new ideas provided on how to recruit volunteers, feedback on their existing programs, help with survey development, and more. One participant who trains grad students to be staff members in their organization also found the grant to be key in developing the skills of these students in areas such as volunteer management and grant writing.

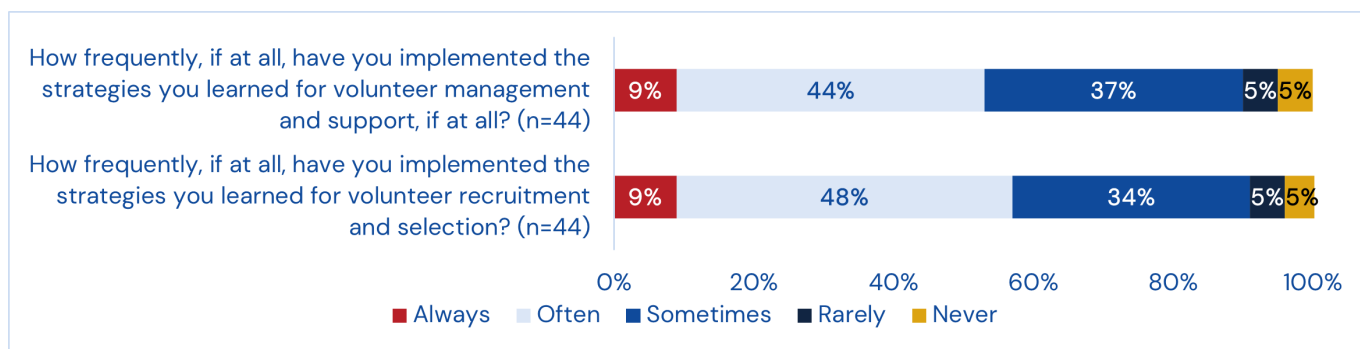
### Youth Council

The member of the Youth Council interviewed described themselves as being “pretty satisfied” with their experience. They were appreciative of the mentorship opportunities available—both for themselves from project staff and for the high school council from the college council.

They also had a few points of feedback. They appreciated the ability to experience mentorship themselves within the program, and they wanted the council to, in future, provide mentorship opportunities for the students they volunteer with as well. The participant also found few ongoing connections with members of the council after their time on it ended, and they suggested creating, at the very least, a text chat of former council members.

Overall, both UServeUtah and training recipients reported moderate to strong positive effects from the training and capacity building provided through the VGF grant program. Regarding the outcomes of implementation, as shown in exhibit 6, the majority (53 percent) of survey respondents shared that they Often or Always implement the strategies they learned for volunteer management and support. Additionally, 57 percent of respondents noted they implemented volunteer recruitment and selection strategies Often or Always.

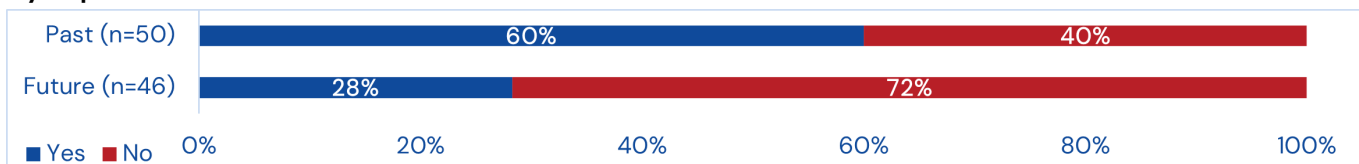
**EXHIBIT 6.—Frequency of implementation**



Source: Volunteer Management Training & Capacity Building Survey collected in January 2023.

As seen in exhibit 7, survey respondents reported on the certifications their organizations had received at the time of survey administration since October 2020 and/or were planning to receive by September 2023. As of October 2020, nearly two-thirds (60 percent) of respondents had received a certification. Nearly one-third (28 percent) noted their organization might receive a certification by September 2023.

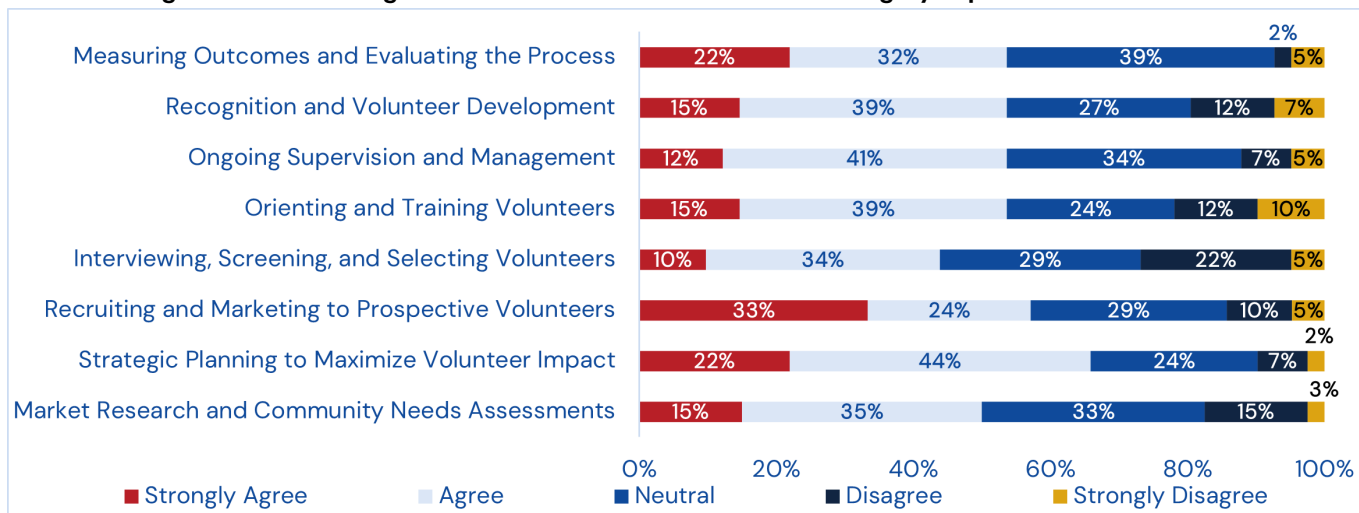
**EXHIBIT 7.—Certifications organizations and staff received as of October 2020 and/or planned to receive by September 2023**



Source: Volunteer Management Training & Capacity Building Survey collected in January 2023.

Survey respondents were also asked to share their agreement regarding their and/or their organization’s need for additional training or support on various topics, as seen in exhibit 8. The topics with the highest agreement on need were Strategic Planning to Maximize Volunteer Impact (70 percent) and Recruiting and Marketing to Prospective Volunteers (57 percent). The topics with the lowest agreement were Market Research and Community Needs Assessments (50 percent) and Interviewing, Training, and Screening Volunteers (44 percent).

**EXHIBIT 8.—Agreement with organizational need for additional training by topic**

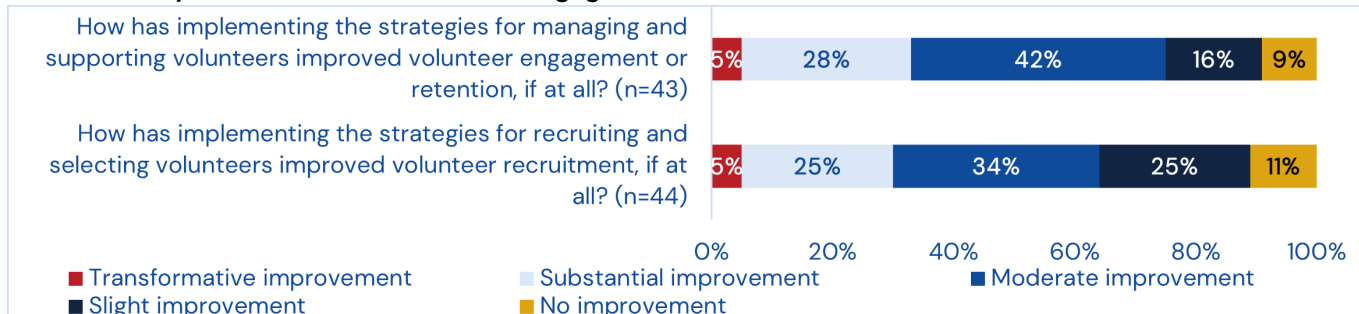


Source: Volunteer Management Training & Capacity Building Survey collected in January 2023.

Lastly, survey respondents shared their perspectives on the effect of the VGF grant on various volunteer outcomes, presented in exhibits 9 and 10.

As seen in exhibit 9, while just under one-third of survey respondents reported *Substantial* or *Transformative* improvements in volunteer engagement/retention and in volunteer recruitment after implementing strategies they learned (33 percent and 30 percent, respectively), the majority of survey respondents noted at least *Moderate* improvement in both (75 percent and 64 percent, respectively).

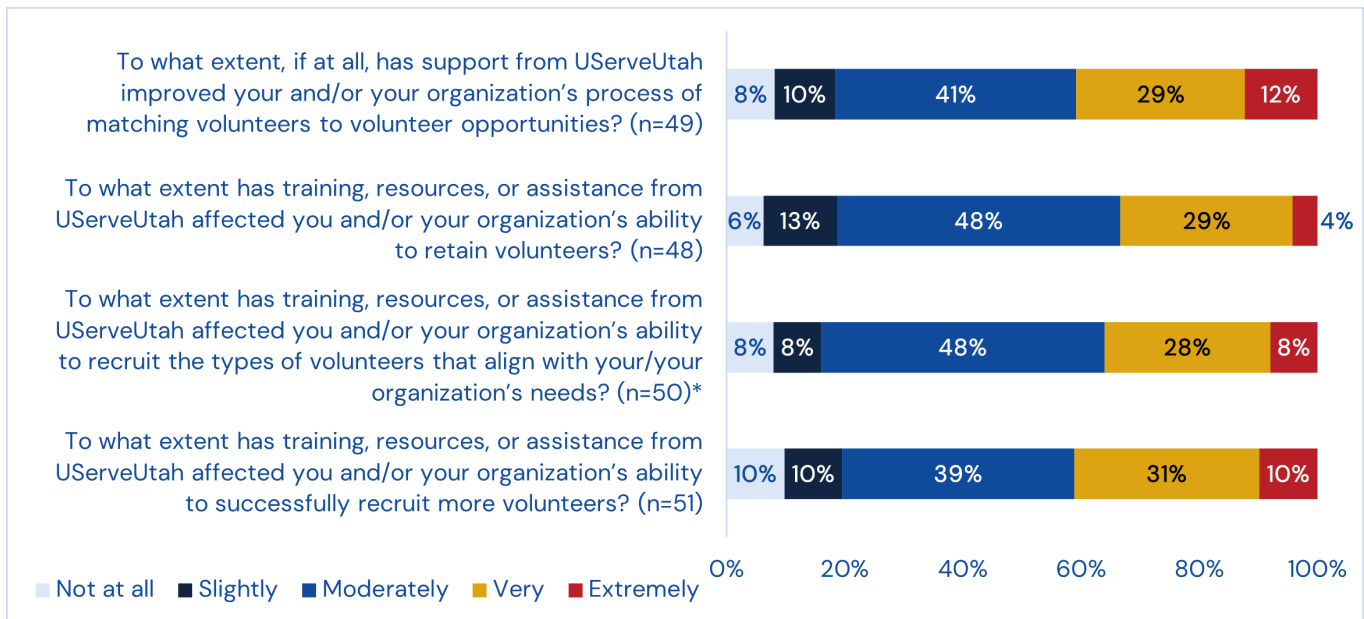
**EXHIBIT 9.—Improvement in recruitment, engagement, and retention**



Source: Volunteer Management Training & Capacity Building Survey collected in January 2023.

Respondents also reported positive changes to specific volunteer outcomes because of the VGF grant. Overall, a minority of respondents reporting *Very* or *Extremely* significant effects (ranging from 33 percent to 41 percent), but a large majority of respondents reported at least *Moderately* significant ones (ranging from 80 percent to 84 percent total). The most supported improvement was organizations’ ability to recruit the types of volunteers that align with the organization’s needs (e.g., certain **skills-based** volunteers, **diverse** volunteers), followed by the process of **matching** volunteers to volunteer opportunities, the ability to **retain** volunteers, and to successfully **recruit** more volunteers.

**EXHIBIT 10.—Effect of VGF grant on volunteer outcomes**



Source: Volunteer Management Training & Capacity Building Survey collected in January 2023.

\*The full text of this question was “To what extent has training, resources, or assistance from UServeUtah affected you and/or your organization’s ability to recruit the types of volunteers that align with your/your organization’s needs (e.g., certain skills-based volunteers, diverse volunteers)?”

## Conclusion

Overall, UServeUtah has been providing praised and effective volunteer capacity building to organizations within their state. As is the case across states, UServeUtah has struggled with the lingering effects of the pandemic, including lower training participation. However, training numbers have significantly rebounded in the past year, and UServeUtah has continued to support a wide range of capacity building activities, including VMT and VPMT trainings, the Community Engagement Grant, and the Youth Council. The majority of participants have found capacity building activities very effective, and UServeUtah has had impacts across populations within the state—though many of these improved initiatives will likely sunset without access to further VGF funding.

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### About AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism, provides opportunities for Americans to serve their country domestically, address the nation's most pressing challenges, improve lives and communities, and strengthen civic engagement. Each year, the agency places more than 200,000 AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in intensive service roles and empowers millions more to serve as long-term, short-term, or one-time volunteers. Learn more at [AmeriCorps.gov](https://www.americorps.gov).

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The [AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation](https://www.americorps.gov/office-of-research-and-evaluation) assists AmeriCorps and its partners in collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data and insights about AmeriCorps programs and civic life in America.

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