A Framework for Volunteerism in the 21st Century

Volunteerism is rapidly being updated to reflect the changes in what volunteers are seeking and the opportunities organizations are realizing can be achieved through volunteers. Here is a beginning framework of vocabulary to describe the changing vision for volunteerism.

	Classic Volunteer Roles	**Expanded Volunteer Roles**
Characteristics	Typically includes: • Well defined roles • Most are entry level and use basic or universally held skills • Directed by staff • Ongoing • Tight scope of duties • Quick start up • Trained on tasks to do	Includes one more of these characteristics: • Self-directed • Taps talents • Broad scope of duties • High level of accountability and responsibility • Entrepreneurial • Addresses unique opportunities, problems or situations • Flexibility • Focused on outcome(s), with freedom to determine means to achieve the outcome • Trained on mission of organization
Prevalence	An estimated 70% to 85% of volunteer positions in nonprofit and governmental organizations have been structured as "Classic Volunteer Roles."	"Expanded Volunteer Roles" have existed in the past, but there have been fewer of these than the "Classic Volunteer Roles". Many consider this to be an underdeveloped area of volunteerism; one that has great potential because of the growing interest of all generations in high impact volunteering and the number of individuals aged 50+ who are expected to be available to volunteer over the next decade.
Typical roles	***Doers*** – People who perform a wide range of "hands-on" tasks.	We are just developing an understanding of what roles can be done through the "Expanded Volunteer Roles." These often include high responsibility roles such as: ***Doers Plus***– People who perform a range of "hands-on" tasks that take high level of skill and talent such as social work/counseling, marketing, human resources, etc. ***Managers*** – People who oversee, direct or coordinate a project or function. ***Leaders –*** People who create a vision, set a direction, and stimulate others to achieve results.