



Executive Summary

Trends in Volunteerism | 2018

Research Study

MN Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) conducted a study on trends in volunteerism in April/May 2018 with 239 leaders of volunteers across the state responding to the survey. After a decade of rapid change in volunteerism trends, the study found a relative stabilization of key volunteerism trends, with new trends on the horizon to watch. Results indicated that keys to addressing these trends include having shorter term, flexible and skilled roles to offer volunteers expanding use of technology to support volunteer engagement.

Trends

Three of the top trends found in MAVA's 2014 study remained top trends in the 2018 study:

- 47% seeing increased interest in short term volunteering
- 35% seeing increased interest in volunteering on evenings and weekends
- 30% seeing increased interest in using workplace skills

Volunteers seeming busy emerged as another top trend with 48% of organizations reporting seeing this increase over the past year.

Organizations reported that fewer inquiries about volunteering from the Traditional generation but inquiries from other generations of volunteers are growing.

- 35% seeing more inquiries from Boomers
- 31% seeing more inquiries from high school and college students
- 31% seeing more inquiries from Millennials
- 27% seeing fewer inquiries from the Traditional generation

A trend of high concern was older volunteers aging out of the volunteer workforce and being hard to replace. Forty-five percent of organizations reported seeing an increase in this trend over the past year.

The survey addressed the question: Is volunteerism up or down?

The results indicate that inquiries from volunteers seemed to be stable or increasing overall but the majority of organizations were somewhat short on volunteers to meet needs.

- Regarding new inquiries from potential new volunteers, 13% of respondents saw fewer, 59% saw about the same and 28% saw more
- Regarding amount of time per volunteer, 19% reported seeing less time, 60% seeing about the same and 22% seeing more time
- Regarding the current supply of volunteers compared to need, 16% have more people who want to volunteer than space, 25% have about the right amount, 50% are somewhat short on time to meet needs, and 8% are very short on time to meet needs

The survey results indicated some intriguing emerging trends to watch:

- Interest in virtual volunteering
- Interest in politically motivated volunteering
- Interest in volunteering by students as a forecast of engagement by Generation Z in the volunteer workforce
- Increasing barriers due to regulations and requirements related to volunteering
- Rapid change in the use of technology in volunteerism

Strategies

Volunteer managers are proactively developing and implementing strategies to address complex changes in volunteerism.

- 66% reported involving volunteers in new roles and positions
- 60% increased communication with volunteers
- 57% increased use of social media
- 56% used technology in new ways to communicate with and track volunteers
- 53% streamlined/standardized practices for volunteer intake, screening, placement or training
- 51% reinvigorated volunteer recruitment
- 43% evaluated impact of work done by volunteers
- 43% increased scheduling flexibility for volunteers
- 42% reported involving volunteers in leadership positions or managing projects
- 41% added volunteer positions designed specifically for shorter term volunteers
- 40% stepped up internal advocacy to gain support for volunteer engagement
- 38% trained staff on how to lead and support volunteers

Conclusion

The MAVA 2018 Trends survey found that volunteerism is still in a period of change that requires organizations to reexamine how they are engaging volunteers and to update volunteer engagement practices. However, we also found that trends are more consistent than they had been over the past ten years of rapid change in the field. Although the trends appear to be stabilizing, now is not the time to become complacent, since we still have a lot to do to address the trends of volunteers seeking shorter term, more flexible and skill based opportunities, and we identified emerging trends that will require innovative responses.