

Resources for Cities on Volunteer Engagement: What Value does Volunteer Engagement Add to a City?

The Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) conducted a survey of cities in July 2015. The survey was sent to contacts at 49 cities that were in the MAVA contact list or found online as cities that listed volunteer opportunities, primarily in the metro area. Responses were received back from 26 cities, including 4 cities from Greater MN and 22 cities in the Twin Cities Metro Area.

When asked the question “**What value has your city found through involving volunteers?**” respondents selected the following values:

- Needed work gets done (86% of respondents)
- Build community and relationships amongst residents (86%)
- Connection to residents (77%)
- Gain positive impression & support from residents for the city (77%)
- Civic Pride (73%)
- Additional services are able to be offered to the community (59%)

Survey respondents were also asked: what was the most important value offered by volunteers for their city? Here are a few responses:

“Creating Community Ownership - especially with the youth.”

“For Natural Resources, we deeply value the community relationships that we build as well as facilitating the volunteers' feelings of ownership over their own park land.”

“Connection to the community. The residents take pride in their space when they help out.”

“Willingness to give of themselves for others.”

“Citizen engagement is democracy in action.”

“Recruiting for boards and commissions positions.”

“Use residents' talents to get work done.”

“Volunteers who have had positive experiences are excellent ambassadors and advocates for the city.”

“Builds community relationships while getting needed work done/providing additional services to the community. “

“Animals are better cared for because of volunteers.”

Thank you to Bush Foundation for funding this initiative on city volunteer engagement.