



Arizona Volunteerism Today and in the Future

2016 Survey and Focus Group Results

GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION
ON SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERISM



Governor's Office
of Youth, Faith and
Family

GetInvolved.AZ.gov

Authors:
Bob Shogren, Maureen West, Terence Driscoll, Robert F. Ashcraft, Ph.D.

in collaboration with:

ASU **Lodestar Center**
for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Innovation

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Introduction and Purpose of Report

The ASU Lodestar Center for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Innovation assisted with this study of volunteerism and presents the results under a contract with the Arizona Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family. The information in this report was gathered in partnership with the Arizona Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism for the State Service Plan for Arizona (2016-2019). When completed, the plan will:

1. **Set forth priorities, goals, and strategies for the promotion of service and volunteerism;**
2. **Determine better methods of leveraging national service resources to address critical community needs;**
3. **Articulate a plan for strengthening Arizona's service and volunteerism infrastructure.**

Executive Summary

Two Arizona generations, 17-to-35-year old "millennials," and adults 55 and older, are driving changes in volunteerism, according to a study of 900 Arizonans conducted for the Arizona Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism.

The largest pool of today's Arizona volunteers is 55 and older, but the millennial generation holds great hope for the future of volunteerism, according to study participants, who say millennials bring new energy, enthusiasm, and innovation when organizations can get them through the door and keep them involved.

Volunteers of all ages want their skills and talents to be used well, but volunteer coordinators and nonprofit leaders say they need to go a step further for millennials, customizing positions to their skills rather than making them perform existing assignments.

These new demands bring challenges and training needs. One nonprofit leader said: "We have organizations not able to fully differentiate between volunteers and employees. All of a sudden you have volunteers doing what employees should be doing and not getting paid—these are new HR issues."

In addition, volunteers of all ages want more flexibility: short-term, immediate assignments; evening and weekend opportunities; situations where families can volunteer together; assignments for youth and individuals with disabilities; and arrangements to help remotely via telephone or internet.

The younger volunteers want more support from their workplaces, including paid time off to give back to the community. They appreciate incentives such as expense stipends, free parking, food, and T-shirts that show their involvement. They want recognition. One millennial advised nonprofits seeking his service: "Include a learning component to the opportunity, or clearly state what volunteers get in return for their service: good feeling, better health, networking, new job skills."

Survey and focus group participants said that volunteers of all ages want to connect with others, and they see volunteering as community building. They want personal growth and learning though



McDowell Sonoran Conservancy volunteer Roger Riepe talks about pack rats during a hike with Scottsdale youth. The nonprofit taps into each volunteer's interests. (Photo by Michael Brace)

their volunteer assignments. To increase the volunteer pool, nonprofits must emphasize that providing their service is an educational opportunity, and then make volunteers feel they are part of something bigger than themselves.

Across the board, the study's participants suggested a statewide, multi-pronged public awareness marketing campaign to increase the number of volunteers in the state, noting that Arizona needs to build a culture where volunteering is part of more people's lives.

They point out two related problems: many Arizonans don't know about the needs for volunteerism in the state, and, for those who do want to help out, it can be hard to find volunteer opportunities. Websites and other tools listing volunteer opportunities are available, but they are numerous and fragmented. Respondents voiced the need for a centralized source for listing all volunteer opportunities and for registering the skills of available volunteers.

About the cover: 100,000 volunteers help St. Mary's Food Bank each year. The organization offers short-term assignments that appeal to millennials. (Cover photo courtesy of St. Mary's Food Bank)

Public policy changes were recommended: streamline the background investigation and fingerprinting processes to which volunteers are subjected; consider tax credits for workplaces to allow employees to volunteer; and provide transportation subsidies for older and financially disadvantaged volunteers.

Participants in the study said they value AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and VISTA and want to see them expanded to better serve rural and small organizations. They said that nonprofit staff and volunteer coordinators need more training to handle generational changes, and to grow the volunteer pool.

Methods and Participants

Age Group	Participants	Percentage
12-24 years	34	5%
25-34 years	87	13%
35-44 years	82	12%
45-54 years	135	20%
55 and over	331	49%
Under 12	3	0%

*Survey participants by age group (Online survey only)
672 responded to this question*

County	Participants
Apache	5
Cochise	30
Coconino	29
Gila	19
Graham	13
Greenlee	3
La Paz	21
Maricopa	460
Mohave	9
Navajo	14
Pima	167
Pinal	58
Santa Cruz	6
Yavapai	27
Yuma	2

*Survey & Focus Participants
by County: 863 responded
to this question*

To gather comments and advice from people and organizations connected with volunteerism, the Commission conducted an online survey and held 15 focus groups in Arizona. There were 900 total participants: 678 online survey respondents and 222 focus group participants. The online survey contained 10 open-ended questions. Responses came from residents of 92 Arizona cities and towns, covering all of Arizona’s 15 counties. Twenty-one percent of the participants were men, and 79 percent were women. The largest group taking the survey were volunteers: 34 percent. The next largest group were people who manage volunteers: 16 percent. Others work at organizations with volunteer programs (15 percent) or lead organizations that benefit from volunteers (12 percent).

Key Findings

1. **Volunteers are having an impact in small towns and metro areas across Arizona.**

Survey takers and focus group participants said many organizations, programs, and key community events wouldn't exist without volunteers. Helping others is personally satisfying and volunteers like that they are extending the work of organizations and strengthening their communities. Through volunteering, people are building new communities and connections, which young and old say they want. They are touched by the generosity of people who give their time, often to multiple organizations, especially in small towns. Comments like this were typical:

- "In my neighborhood, I don't think our schools could run without all the parents that volunteer for everything, no matter what it is, large or small."
- "Parker would not exist without volunteering."

2. **More public awareness of the benefits of volunteering is needed to increase the number of Arizona volunteers.**

Respondents said most volunteers are older Arizonans. A statewide marketing campaign touting the benefits of volunteering could attract people of all races, families, young people, and working-age people. It could use traditional media such as billboards and pro bono TV spots, HOA and AARP newsletters, newspapers, direct engagement between organizations and senior centers, and also employ social media, with a variety of YouTube videos that tell volunteer stories. It could launch a central registry in Arizona for people who want to find volunteer opportunities. (Such services exist but do not combine all offerings.) Focus group participants suggested that a pro bono sponsor or Arizona foundation might be found to finance a marketing campaign, and that other Arizona governmental offices, such as the Arizona Office of Tourism, might cooperate.

- "We should show volunteerism as a mutually beneficial relationship."

3. **More organizations are using volunteer skills and talents and tapping into their passions, but more training is needed to navigate management issues so that volunteers and staff can work more comfortably together.**

Volunteers want to give back to the community, and are looking for more respect from staff members. Staff members need to better communicate their expectations, treat volunteers with respect, and keep them better informed of the impact of their work.

- "Volunteers should be cared for not just as volunteers, but as donors. It's a potential missed opportunity to not realize the depth with which they can give. We don't get them connected enough to the work to get them to be donors."
- "We should be building relationships, investing in people on a different level so they don't feel like they can't show up one day."

4. **Streamline the background and fingerprint processes.** Survey and focus group participants reported that fingerprinting and backgrounding of new volunteers takes too long. While it is important, the vetting process needs to be streamlined and less costly to volunteers. Some organizations pay the costs of backgrounding and others don't. One focus group recommended finding legislators to introduce a bill to make it a more efficient process.
 - "So many times, it seems like there are a million hoops to jump through to do any volunteering. As a manager, I understand that, but it does cut back on people giving time when half of that time is just in getting a position where they can volunteer."
5. **More flexibility needs to be provided by volunteer organizations.** In order to attract a more diverse group of volunteers, there needs to be more flexibility for the times that volunteers can participate. Volunteers want more short-term and immediate volunteering opportunities, including nights, weekends and activities they can do from their own homes or offices. The latter could help older volunteers and others with transportation limitations who want to continue helping out, but find it difficult to travel.
6. **Keep volunteers in the loop about results.** While 64 percent of survey takers said they learned about program results, the major source was their first-hand observations. They saw the results in their clients' faces, or their comments, or as they watched their lives become more successful over time. Whether they hear about results depends on the organization they volunteer for.
7. **Millennial-age young adults want volunteering to be a two-way street.** The 17-to-35-year-old Arizonans consider community involvement as a core part of their self-definition, survey and focus group participants said. As they are also busy building families and careers, organizations need to link volunteering to professional networking, resume-building, and career aspirations. As one respondent stated: "Emphasize that the skills they are learning as volunteers can apply to future, well-paying jobs."

They also spoke of incentives, ranging from college credit, paid time off from employers, gift cards, T-shirts, public recognition, and food to entice volunteering. Use social media more effectively to recruit them, and consider group activities that would be meaningful and social.

Young adults want flexibility and they want to see the impact of their work. They want to volunteer in the evenings or on weekends or even remotely. They are project-focused and want short-term deadlines with defined outcomes. They want to be involved in the development of these programs.

- "This generation wants to make a difference in the world and feel like part of a global community. They would be drawn to activities that support those feelings and goals. They like to feel heard and are more willing to participate in opportunities they create themselves, rather than pre-existing opportunities."

8. **55-plus volunteers say “come to where we are” to recruit.** Older Arizonans are willing volunteers with invaluable experience and skill sets to offer organizations. However, they note that there is a lot of improvement to be made in how nonprofit agencies connect with them.

While young adults want to learn about volunteer opportunities through social media, older volunteers suggest in-person outreach. To recruit, respondents suggest going to places where the population is likely to congregate, including places of worship, retirement communities, veterans' organizations, and senior centers. Additionally, they cite a need for more promotion of existing services that help match older volunteers with places that need them, such as Senior Corps and Experience Matters.

Volunteers want organizations to match their talents and skills to appropriate assignments. Many nonprofits are doing that, but not all. Those already volunteering want more coordination and ongoing communication.

- “Volunteers feel more successful when they know exactly what they need to do, for how long, where, and for whom.”

9. **National service resources need more promotion and expansion.** Respondents value AmeriCorps, Senior Corps and VISTA in their communities. Their suggestions center around letting more people know about these programs and expanding their reach.

Survey respondents said that service programs need to be promoted more. Some proposed media campaigns to recruit future volunteers. Others said promotion was needed to better explain how these programs work. AmeriCorps and VISTA need to expand their reach to smaller organizations, or those that serve rural or underserved communities. Providing a required stipend to those volunteers was also an issue for nonprofits with shrinking resources.

Respondents also said that these groups could tailor their efforts to meet the specific needs of the communities better. Or, they could provide terms longer than one year, so participants have more time to learn how to be effective.

- “Provide a clear path to partnerships between community organizations and national service programs. Provide testimonials/stories of how national service members have impacted communities. More often than not, people have absolutely no idea what ‘AmeriCorps’ is, much less the other branches of national service.”

Question-by-Question Analysis of the Online Survey

Q1: What are the high points of volunteerism in your community?

A quarter of survey respondents provided more than one high point of volunteerism in their community, with 583 answers from 433 people.

The top reasons:

1. Helping others is satisfying (27 percent).
 - "It's great being part of something larger than yourself."
 - "It makes me feel good to help others."
 - "It makes everything that may be going not so great in your personal life dissolve a bit while you give back through service."
2. Volunteering extends the work of an organization (21 percent).
 - "In a small community like ours, it is volunteer efforts that move most major projects (through advocacy, man-power, fundraising, etc.)"
3. Strengthening the community (20 percent).
 - "No matter how big or how small the act may seem, it impacts our community as a whole."
4. Connecting to others (13 percent). As volunteers, they are building communities, sometimes expanding their circles to new types of people.
 - "A high point is the personal connections made between volunteers and those who receive their guidance/mentoring."
 - "People from all walks of life come together to help each other."
5. Community generosity (11 percent). The willingness of so many people to help out touched many participants.
 - "Seeing so many people dedicated to their community and wanting to make a difference makes all that we do worth it."

Other reasons cited included using their skills and talents (9 percent), personal growth (7 percent), the variety of volunteer opportunities (7 percent), and various reasons (6 percent), such as the health benefits of volunteer activity.

Q2: What are the challenges of volunteerism in your community?

The challenges were varied, but the top two cited (in a tie) were recruiting/retaining of volunteers and the limited pool of volunteers.

Volunteer coordinators and nonprofit leaders say volunteers of all ages want experiences, not just assignments. They want to have an impact they can see. Volunteer directors are creating positions that tap into volunteers' skills, talents and passions rather than making them fit into existing assignments.

Participants said that once volunteers sign on, organizations need to work at keeping them. Fewer volunteers are receiving 25-year pins.

- “Volunteers seem to look for short-term volunteer opportunities.”

On the limited pool of volunteers and need for diversity, one participant wrote:

- “Too many are over 70, and that is a concern as the Arizona population grows older. To attract younger volunteers, opportunities are needed on weekends and for family participation. More effort is needed to attract teens, people of color, and people with disabilities.”

Top Challenges of Volunteering (455 responses)	Respondents	Percentage
Recruiting/retaining volunteers	82	18%
Limited pool of volunteers	80	18%
Matching volunteer needs with organization's	68	15%
Lack of resources	50	11%
Volunteers have limited time	45	10%
Lack of awareness of opportunities	39	9%
Lack of coordination, support by staff	35	8%
Transportation	29	7%
Staff HR issues	14	3%
No centralized volunteering resource	13	3%

Regarding volunteer matching, another respondent observed:

- “The new breed of volunteer wants to participate when they want and how they want. The challenge is finding volunteer managers able to make good fits and remain patient and flexible.”

Q3. In your own experience as a volunteer, what could be done differently to improve volunteerism for you and people your age?

59 survey takers indicated that organizations need to make it easier for people to find volunteer opportunities. Some respondents prefer websites like idealist.org, justserve.org or volunteermatch.org, but others said there were too many places to look. They generally suggested a one-stop shop that would serve as a community clearinghouse for volunteering. Or, they simply said: “Make volunteering options more visible.”

Other comments:

- “Create a central list of organizations and what they do to easily ‘shop around’ for a place to volunteer.”
- “Have a central place for locating opportunities to volunteer statewide.”
- “I would like to find an easy way to match my skills and talents to a nonprofit.”

Top ways to improve volunteering (340 responses)	Respondents	Percentage
Easier way to find opportunities	59	17%
Growth, learning, training, networking	43	12%
Flexibility	42	12%
Clear communication	40	12%
Public awareness of importance of service	39	11%
More coordination of volunteers	30	9%
More respect for volunteers	23	7%
More recognition	23	7%
Opportunities for youth, families, disabled	21	6%
Tie: Use skills and talents and monetary incentives	20	6%

(340 replies; 76 had no suggested changes)

Others suggested using social media as a stronger tool for spreading news about volunteer needs.

Thirty-nine participants called for statewide multimedia public awareness campaigns so more people would know their help is needed.

- “We need to create a volunteering brand through all media, not just asking for things, but revealing true stories of possible impact—one person or need at a time.”

Forty-three participants also wanted more growth, learning, training and networking opportunities.

- “Include a learning component with the opportunity, or clearly state what volunteers get in return for their service: i.e. a good feeling, better health, networking, new job skills, etc.”

And, twenty people said they want organizations to use them for their unique talents.

- “Ask your volunteers what they want to do.”

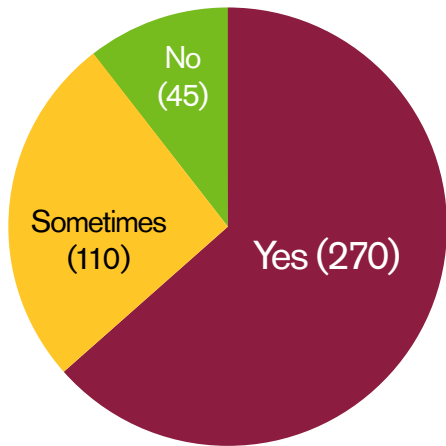
Forty-two participants asked for more flexibility.

- “There needs to be a greater selection of volunteer opportunities for people who work during regular work-week hours, opportunities for families to serve together and opportunities for middle school and high school ages and opportunities to serve on Saturday. There are many people of all ages who want to serve but most agencies want long-term commitments from volunteers. This is understandable but locks out a large part of the population who want to serve but who are not retired or taking time off from education to serve.”

Twenty-three respondents wanted more respect from staff. Senior volunteers want to be respected for their experience, and younger volunteers for their potential.

- “There is a stigma that people my age (college and college grads) have this sense of entitlement—that we are lazy and not passionate about issues that aren’t centered around us. Though this is their perception, nothing could be further from the truth. We do have passions, we excel at many things, we bring talents to what we do. We are just the age group that has to fight the hardest for opportunities. Those seeking volunteers just see us as kids: a mirror, perhaps, of their own children. We are so much more than that.”

Q4: In your own experience as a volunteer, do you get to see or hear about the results of your work? If so, how?



A majority of survey takers, 64 percent of 425 respondents, said they see or hear about the results of their volunteer work, but not necessarily from interactions with staff members. Twenty-four percent said they sometimes learned about results, but 10 percent never did.

How they learn about results of their volunteerism (316 answered more than yes/no)	Respondents	Percentage
From people they serve	98	31%
1:1 communication with staff members	65	21%
Newsletters, annual reports, social media, emails	41	13%
Court or other official documents	26	8%
Meetings where progress updates are provided	23	7%
Data, survey, research reports from the organization	19	6%
At board meetings	14	4%
News media stories	13	4%
At recognition ceremonies or other events	10	3%
Information provided by other volunteers	7	2%

Yes, I learn about results (270 of 425):

- "I get to see the results on the looks on the kids' faces that I have helped to make an impact with. And there's nothing more rewarding than that."
- "I learn about impact from monthly data provided by the organization."

Sometimes (110 of 425):

- "Sometimes a volunteer manager tells me, or another participant lets me know."
- "Sometimes recognized, sometimes taken for granted."
- "Depends on the organization you volunteer for."

No (45 of 425):

- "The only time I hear anything is when money is needed and a donation is involved."
- "No, I have not normally heard of the results of my work. Understanding how my work contributed to improving the community would have been great to know."
- "No, and this is a weakness. With the exception of something like Habitat for Humanity, when you see the finished product, much of the results piece is missing."

Q5: Thinking three-to-five years out, what important existing and emerging community needs could be effectively addressed by service and volunteerism?

These answers were grouped and coded according to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) Priorities: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures (Aging in Place, Childhood Obesity, Prevention,

Health Care Prevention and Access), Veterans and Military Families, and Capacity Building. Responses that did not fall into the CNCS priorities were coded as “other.”

The top CNCS priority issues were Economic Opportunity, Education, Capacity Building, and Healthy Futures.

The percentages below reflect how frequently each existing/emerging need was mentioned.

Community issues/needs currently being addressed (492 responses)	Respondents	Percentage
Economic Opportunity	124	25%
Education	96	20%
Capacity Building	82	17%
Healthy Futures	73	15%
Environmental Stewardship	21	4%
Disaster Services	7	1%
Veterans and Military Families	7	1%
Other	82	17%

For descriptions of the terms listed above, please visit: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/focus-areas>

Q6: What tools, networks, and/or resources could best expand, deepen and support service and volunteer efforts in the next three-to-five years?

Forty percent of participants suggested new efforts to recruit volunteers: 20 percent urged a community outreach/public awareness effort, 10 percent opted for having one central source for volunteer offerings, and 10 percent wanted better use of social media and the internet to recruit volunteers.

Eighty-four participants called for the need to create a “culture of volunteerism” in Arizona:

- “There are many people willing to volunteer, they just need a little push to help them get involved.”

But suggestions on how to create that culture varied, many of them along generational lines:

- “Social media and online resources would be the best resources to expand. The community and the world are increasingly engaging with organizations online. Understanding how

to connect the online world with volunteerism in an effective and meaningful way will be important for future development.”

- “Talk to local news organizations and call meetings to talk about the importance of volunteering.”
- “Create a functioning, huge website portal where community needs match up with the volunteers’ talents. Implement a huge state-wide campaign to announce it.”

Tools, networks, resources needed in future (420 responses)	Respondents	Percentage
Community outreach/public awareness campaign	84	20%
Central source for finding volunteers	42	10%
Expand use of social media/Internet for recruiting	41	10%
Training	36	9%
More collaboration	33	8%
More government support	32	8%
Recruit more youth as volunteers	27	6%
Collect more data on impact of volunteers (four-way tie), more recognition, additional workplace support, and better use skills, talents of volunteers	9	2%
Expand AmeriCorps	8	1%
More networking opportunities (tie) and more funding for volunteer coordinators	7	1%

Forty-two participants, one in 10, called for a central source for volunteering, but there was no one solution.

- “Have an active volunteer center that is fully staffed to be the hub for connecting volunteers and agencies would be a great resource to have.”
- “A database of local needs in the community where organizations can regularly post and recruit volunteers.”
- “Create a functioning, huge website portal where community needs match up with the volunteers’ talents. Implement a huge state-wide campaign to announce it.”

Thirty-six survey respondents asked for more training, and it was also a theme at all 15 focus groups:

- “Continue the Governor’s Summit for training and leadership. The better leaders are trained, the more effective volunteer programs will be.”

Millennials want more support from their workplace, even going beyond paid time off to volunteer. Said one survey taker:

- “Offer tax credits to businesses that allow employees to take time off to volunteer.”

Q7. Based on your experience and opinion, please rate how well Arizona organizations engage volunteers.

Respondents were asked to rate Arizona’s engagement with volunteers in a number of categories. Overall, the sentiments were lukewarm. On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the most favorable rating, the highest scoring category (Raise funds in support of volunteer programs) only averaged a 6.11. The lowest rated category, at 4.92, was “Design volunteer programs that are central to organizational missions.” The remaining categories ranged in the 5’s and are illustrated here:



Q8. Given that 1 in 4 Arizonans will be age 55 and over by year 2020, do you have any thoughts, recommendations or ideas on how best to: Engage older active adults as sources of social capital, making good use of their skills and experience to address community needs? Promote the skills and experiences of older active adults to businesses and nonprofits? Promote the continued civic engagement of older active adults in multi-generational activities, including early childhood education and care, family literacy, tutoring/mentoring youth, after school programs, respite services for the aging and their caregivers?

Participants suggested that older Arizonans are willing volunteers with invaluable experience and skill sets. However, there is a lot of improvement to be made in connecting nonprofit agencies and older Arizonans. A total of 108 respondents (37 percent) cited a need for better promotion or publicity of volunteer opportunities. As one respondent noted, “People often want to help but are simply unaware of opportunities, so make them more well-known.”

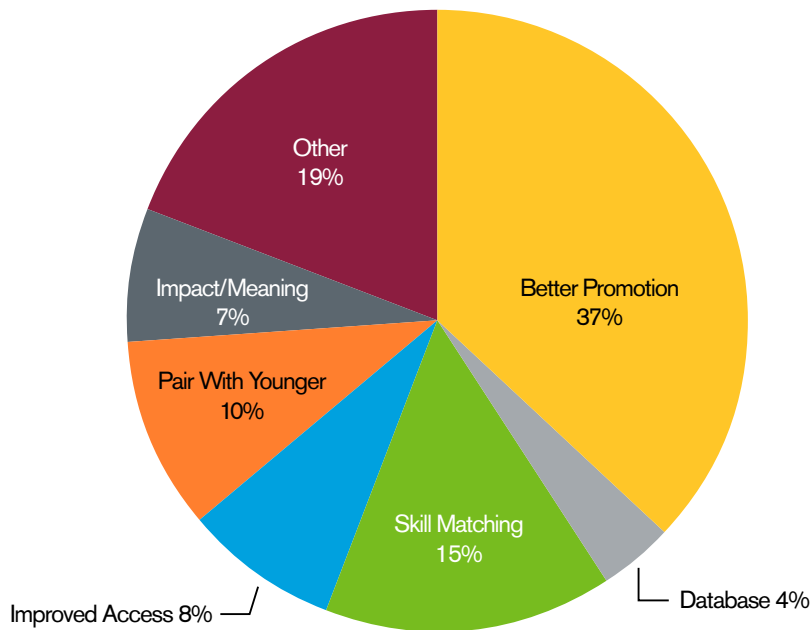


Virginia helps her neighbor Lillian shop for her weekly groceries. In 2015, Duet volunteers provided 46,566 hours of personalized services, including rides to grocery stores and medical appointments, computer training, and home repairs, helping 757 Arizona elders and adults with disabilities stay in their homes. (Photo courtesy of Duet)

Some of these respondents offered specific suggestions, such as using a more targeted approach to more traditional media (television, newspapers) and places that cater to this population. One participant suggested, “Actively distribute information to this age group - possibly through AARP and the AZ Council on Aging so people know these opportunities exist.” Another respondent continued, “Advertise volunteer opportunities within their community in HOA newsletters, community newsletters and bulletin boards.” Another suggested “job fairs” aimed at recruiting senior volunteers. Respondents suggested going to places the population is likely to be, such as places of worship, 55+ communities, veterans’ organizations, and senior centers. Additionally, they cited a need for more promotion of existing groups that help match older volunteers with places that need them, such as Senior Corps and Experience Matters. 12 respondents (4 percent) suggested the creation of some form of centralized statewide database containing potential volunteers and their skill sets that organizations can tap into when needed.

Forty-two respondents (15 percent) expressed the need to properly match the skills and experience of older Arizonans with the tasks they are asked to perform. “My mom moved here at age 70 to Arizona. She is a CPA and talented businesswoman. She has tried to be an active volunteer and had real trouble finding a meaningful way to give back. After 2 years, she is now providing tax prep work for AARP for low income individuals, but her talents could be used so much more if someone would help her find the right opportunity.”

Engaging older Arizonans



Thirty participants (10 percent) specifically suggested pairing older Arizonans with members of younger generations as mentors or tutors, or to use their professional experience to train those of any age who work in similar fields.

Additionally, 24 participants (8 percent) said there is a need for improved access and flexibility. Several respondents specifically suggested lack of transportation as a barrier. Others suggested the need for flexible scheduling arrangements and easier

application processes, such as streamlining background checks or reducing the paperwork burden that comes with applying to be a volunteer.

Q9. What are your ideas on how to attract and retain volunteers from the millennial generation (young adults under the age of 35 years)?

Respondents acknowledged that millennials are still in the beginning stages of building both their families and their careers. As such, career-focus, incentives, and flexibility permeated many of the responses to this question. Twenty-five respondents (7 percent) specifically mentioned linking volunteer work to professional networking, resume-building, and career aspirations in order to attract millennials. As one respondent said, "Promote the program as a way to gain experience to improve their resume and chances of getting jobs, as well as start a network of potential employers."

Fifty-three participants (15 percent) spoke of using incentives, ranging from college credit, paid time off from employers, gift cards, T-shirts, public recognition, and food to entice volunteering.

Forty-five respondents (13 percent) noted that millennials need opportunities with time flexibility. Some suggested the need to schedule volunteering events outside of normal business hours, like in the evenings or on weekends. Many others noted that millennials tend to be project-focused and prefer programmatic volunteer opportunities, and that organizations would serve themselves better by developing short-term projects with defined outcomes instead of trying to gain long-term commitments. Still others suggested offering tasks they can perform from their own homes or offices.

Fifty-four respondents (15 percent) spoke of the need to expand social media use to attract millennials, and 64 more (18 percent) expressed the need to make sure organizations offer these



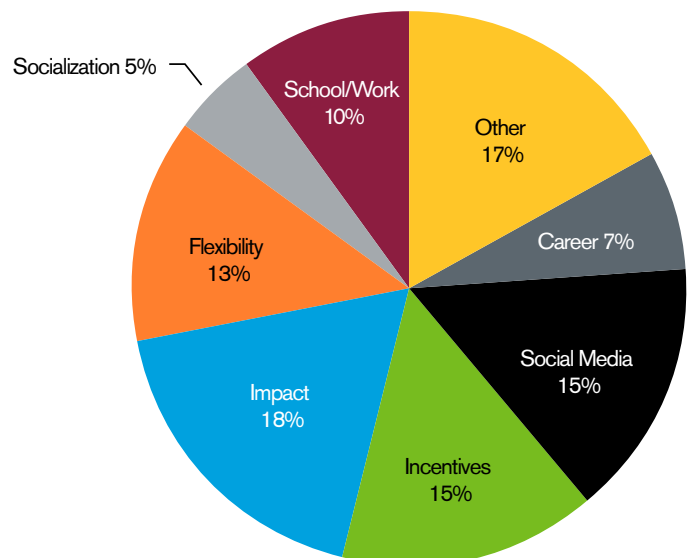
In 2015, a total of 5,316 volunteers donated 43,405 of volunteer service to help Chicanos Por La Causa's work to develop strong and healthy communities. These volunteers helped make repairs last year at apartments that house women and families fleeing domestic violence. (Photo courtesy Rebuilding Together)

younger volunteers substantive, meaningful opportunities with visible impacts. As one participant wrote, "Give them responsibility. Make sure they have meaningful activities. Don't stick them where they do exactly the same thing over and over again." Millennials want projects with defined outcomes, and they want to be involved in the development of these programs.

Additionally, another 19 participants (5 percent) suggested millennials would prefer some kind of social or group dynamic when volunteering.

One respondent covered many of the above sentiments: "Use social media, make the commitment flexible, and highlight the social justice and equity issues that are being addressed. Help them see immediate results, and set up regular reminders!"

Engaging Millennials



Q10. If/When national service resources are available (AmeriCorps, VISTA, Senior Corps, NCCC or National Civilian Community Corps) how might these resources be leveraged to assist the community volunteer efforts in addressing the community issues/or needs?

Twenty-eight respondents (23 percent) said that more effort was needed to promote AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, or VISTA. One person offered this idea: “I think AmeriCorps and other national service programs need to be in high schools, right next to the National Guard. I didn’t know about VISTA until I was almost out of college. This is a problem, engage people in National Service early!” Some said promotion was needed to help clear up how these programs work. One respondent said, “Provide testimonials/stories of how national service members have impacted communities. More often than not people have absolutely no idea what ‘AmeriCorps’ is, much less the other branches of national service.”

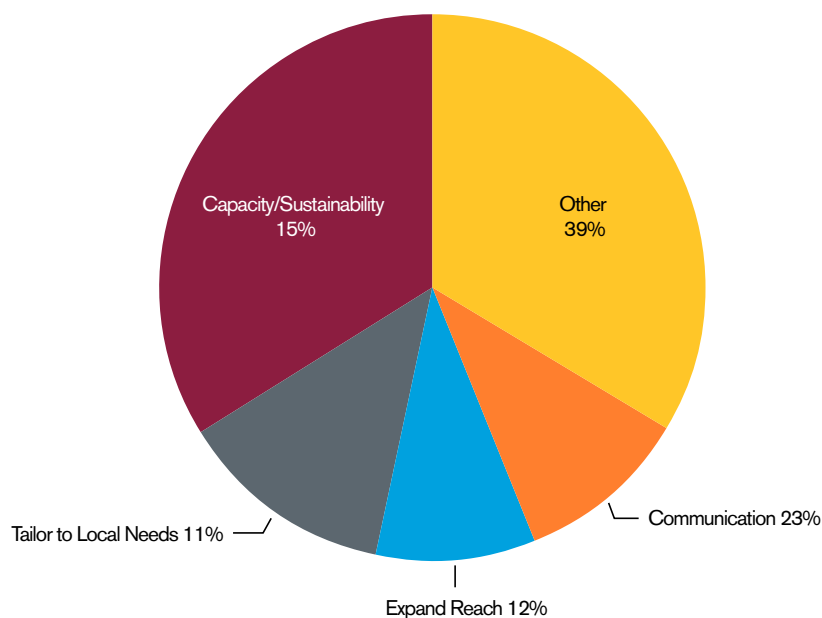
Another fifteen (12 percent) respondents felt that these groups needed to expand their reach, specifically to smaller organizations, or those that serve rural or underserved communities:

“Some of these national services resources are not readily available or accessible to members in under-served or economically depressed areas which creates a divide or vacuum of resources or services. Volunteers tend to be drawn from selected pools of participants within our communities.”

“Please look at rural and unincorporated areas of Arizona. We are truly struggling.”

“Many non-profits are not large enough to approach operation of a CNCS program; however, they need better solutions and oversight for volunteer programs. Having a state run or state sponsored AmeriCorps program that offered assistance to smaller agencies would fill an existing gap.”

National Service Resources



“The stipend is an issue for nonprofits with shrinking resources—finding a way to help those agencies find the funding for the stipend would be helpful.”

Thirteen respondents (11 percent) said service groups could tailor their efforts to meet the specific needs of the community better:

“Develop groups around the state to do local community needs assessments and help them develop plans to meet those needs. Then have these groups regularly gather to interact and build volunteerism around the state. Share best practices and strongly focus on breaking down communication barriers.”

“The national service resources could be better leveraged if they are on the same page and have the same agenda/initiative as the local volunteer recruitment efforts.”

“I think that making the outcomes fit to what each agency needs can be difficult. So instead of creating programs to meet the needs of the community, some agencies create a program to meet the requirements of NCCC and miss out on part or all of their own mission.”

Nineteen participants (15 percent) stated the need to ensure that these groups help with capacity or sustainability efforts. Some suggested longer terms than a year so participants had more time to build a solid infrastructure. One respondent stated: “VISTAS are usually good capacity builders for the community groups and agencies which they serve. I suggest that instead of direct services to client populations, VISTAS should be engaged in capacity building for their respective groups/agencies which they serve.”

Analysis of the 15 Focus Groups

Differences between rural and urban volunteering

Discussions in the 15 focus groups held throughout Arizona probed deeper than the survey, unveiling some differences between the communities. Rural participants said volunteers are an integral and essential part of community life--the volunteer fire department volunteers, for example. Urban participants tend to see volunteers as a way of leveraging the activities of organizations--the food bank volunteers sorting boxes in the back, for instance.

Focus Groups	Participants	Organizations
15	222	144

From Casa Grande:

- "Volunteers used to be the cherry on top of the sundae, now they are the ice cream."

From Parker:

- "Parker would not exist without volunteering."
- "Our county fair does not run without volunteers."

From Green Valley:

- "About 36 percent of our population volunteer."

From Sierra Vista:

- "Volunteerism helps to fill gaps in the community" and "Volunteerism is positively intertwined with a community's identity."

From Flagstaff

- Volunteers have become deft at "natural emergencies over the last five years." Volunteers have "filled sandbags and helped in digging people out of their homes and cars. For the Belmont tornado, they helped families whose homes were destroyed."

Rural community members emphasized that the high touch approach attracts volunteers in smaller areas. "Volunteerism works here because of word-of-mouth," said one Prescott participant. Another added, "Sometimes it's the simple strategies like putting up posters in stores that work the best."

They also hear about results of their work. One Parker participant said: "We are a small community. Everyone kind of knows everyone and what we do." Another said the results "make the front page of the newspaper, social media sites and web pages." And being a small community, another said, "has allowed me to see results firsthand."

Like urban organizations, volunteers are assuming higher-level assignments. Participants from Casa Grande want volunteers to take on leadership roles and say organizations need to do a better job with volunteer leadership development.

Other rural needs include more coordination. A Sierra Vista participant commented: “There is no communication among volunteer organizations, so there can be duplication.”

Green Valley, Casa Grande, and Prescott attract winter visitors. “They have a lot of time on their hands and want to give back,” said a Casa Grande participant. “The only problem is, they are here and then they are gone, and sometimes it’s hard because they just leave.”

Study participants said that rural communities need more structure in their planning, and they need more grants and more AmeriCorps financial support.

Parker: “It would be nice to get an AmeriCorps grant/funding in our area to assist with several agencies in need. Instead of creating state or national organizations that dictate need, projects and allocations, we should really look at what works in smaller communities and then help those programs.”

Some study participants in urban areas said that corporate support is lagging, while others say it is growing but changing. Corporate groups don’t want “make work” projects, but they do want days where volunteers will have an impact.

Some urban nonprofit leaders say they feel great competition for volunteers, while others say they have a surplus. Focus group participants suggested creating a system where volunteer time and talent could be shared among nonprofit organizations.

Volunteer coordinators said their jobs now require longer hours and weekends as they try to meet the needs of volunteers. More organizations are customizing positions to help volunteers have a meaningful engagement, which takes staff time. Volunteers also want night and weekend assignments and family volunteering. As volunteers step into leadership roles, there are major human resource challenges. More support is needed from top management in organizations, and volunteer coordinators and nonprofit staff members say they need more training.

Focus group members were asked, “If you could change one thing about volunteerism in your community, what would it be?”

The replies:

- Investigate new and best practices in volunteerism and disseminate that information.
- Legislative regulations on background checks and fingerprinting need to be streamlined and made more cost effective and efficient.
- Centralized communication/cost-sharing.
- More collaboration among groups, and willingness to share volunteer time and talent.
- Educate the community about volunteering.
- Spend more 1:1 time with potential volunteers to find out what they want to do. Many people want more meaningful work and we can provide it.
- Don't assume that all older adults want highly-skilled assignments. Some careerists have 'been there, done that' and just want a volunteer job where they show up and contribute in a small way.
- More learning opportunities.
- Mentoring—we older volunteers need to figure out how to replace ourselves. We need to co-mingle the generations. We need to make volunteering relevant to the lives of younger generations.
- Get volunteerism back in the schools—get kids volunteering from kindergarten through high school. Learn and Serve ended in 2011. We are starting to get kids graduating from high school who haven't been required to do volunteer work. Volunteerism isn't part of their lives. That will impact our volunteer pools very soon.
- Create a resource for volunteer ideas and opportunities.
- More funding for volunteer program/training.
- More training for volunteer coordinators.
- We need to better understand the regulations about volunteerism and the displacement of workers if we intend to engage skilled volunteers.
- Public service announcements about community volunteerism. Develop a volunteer hub with tools and experts that can advise us on how we can do volunteerism better.
- Think in terms of the 'Five Languages of Love' when engaging and recognizing volunteers, including providing small gifts, words of affirmation, spending quality time with them, engaging in physical touch as appropriate, and engaging in reciprocal acts of service.
- Grants for volunteerism—make leadership care.
- More appreciation for AmeriCorps. It teaches people how to fish—you have to give something to get something. It isn't a handout. It is an honest-to-goodness government program that builds good citizens.

- Establish a volunteer appreciation program to promote volunteerism by offering certifications, insurance, discount cards, gift cards, training, college credit, letters of recommendation, and above all social support/belonging (like AmeriCorps).
- Certified volunteer management training.

Conclusion: The Next Steps

Volunteers have an impact in small towns and metro areas across Arizona. They extend the work of organizations and strengthen communities, according to 900 volunteers, nonprofit staff members and leaders who participated in focus groups and survey.

Suggested Public Policy Action

- Recruit more volunteers through a statewide campaign to promote the benefits of volunteering.
- Create a centralized Internet database of all volunteer opportunities and willing volunteers (and their offered skills).
- Streamline the background checks and fingerprinting of potential volunteers while still retaining safeguards.

Suggested Nonprofit and Other Agency Action

- Increase training so volunteers and nonprofit staff members can work more comfortably together, as today's volunteers want personal growth and greater flexibility in volunteer assignments, and volunteers are being used in higher leadership roles that can conflict with prior staff duties.
- Communicate with volunteers--they want to see and hear about the impact of their work. Better communication often turns volunteers into donors. This finding is in sync with Independent Sector's April 2016 "Donor Loyalty Study," which reported that, nationally, volunteers tend to become donors when they are provided with personally meaningful work and receive good communication regarding their personal impact.



Appendix

A total of 900 Arizonans participated in this study: 678 answered the online survey and 222 participated in one of 15 focus groups around the state. The online survey contained 10 open-ended questions. Because all but one question in the survey and focus group sessions were open-ended, the responses were analyzed and categorized.

Participants for survey and focus groups were recruited through direct email invitations, social media channels, word-of-mouth, and through partner organizations.

Bob Shogren, executive director of the Arizona Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism, facilitated focus groups throughout the state. Participants for survey and focus groups were recruited through direct email invitations, social media channels, word-of-mouth, and through partner organizations. The following chart depicts the various types of organizations represented.

Because all but one question in the survey and focus group sessions were open-ended, the responses have been analyzed and categorized.

Survey questions:

1. What are the high points of volunteerism in your community?
2. What are the challenges of volunteerism in your community?
3. In your own experience as a volunteer, what could be done differently to improve volunteerism for you and people your age?

Organization Type (Survey and focus groups)	Participant Responses
Nonprofit Organizations	414
Educational Institutions	110
Youth Development Organizations	126
Local Government	67
Youth	70
Senior Service Organizations	47
National Service Programs (AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Vista)	129
Civic Organizations	54
Health Care	83
Retired	81
Faith-based	104
State Government	79
Philanthropy	25
Service Clubs	29
Disability Organizations	27
Corporate/Business	38
Military Veterans Organizations	30
Environmental Organizations	22
Military	10
Tribal Nations	8
Substance Abuse Organizations	48
Juvenile Justice Organizations	32
Violence Against Women/Human Trafficking Organizations	54
Foster Care Organizations	108

Survey Participants by age group (Online survey only) .

**Note: Many participants in this study are affiliated with more than one organization.*

4. In your own experience as a volunteer, do you get to see or hear about results of your work?
If so, how?
5. Thinking three to five years out, what important existing and emerging community needs could be effectively addressed by service and volunteerism?
6. What tools, networks and/or other resources could best expand, deepen and support service and volunteer efforts in the next three to five years?
7. Based on your experience and opinion (as an interested observer, volunteer, working with an organization that engages volunteers or as a volunteer advocate) please rate how well Arizona organizations engage volunteers.
8. Given that 1 in 4 Arizonans will be age 55 and over by year 2020, do you have any thoughts, recommendations or ideas on how best to: a) Engage older active adults as sources of social capital, making good use of their skills and experience to address community needs? b) Promote the skills and experiences of older active adults to businesses and nonprofits? c) Promote the continued civic engagement of older active adults in multi-generational activities, including early childhood education and care, family literacy, tutoring/mentoring youth, after school programs, respite services for the aging and their caregivers, etc.?
9. What are your ideas on how to attract and retain volunteers from the millennial generation (young adults under the age of 35 years)?
10. If/when national service resources are available (AmeriCorps, VISTA, Senior Corps, NCCC) how might these resources be leveraged to assist the community volunteer efforts in addressing community issues/or needs?

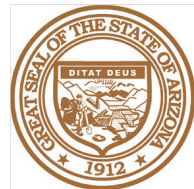
Focus group questions:

1. What are the high points of volunteerism in your community?
2. What are the challenges of volunteerism in your community?
3. Thinking three to five years out, what important existing and emerging community needs could be effectively addressed by service and volunteerism?
4. What tools, networks and/or other resources could best expand, deepen and support service and volunteer efforts in the next three to five years?
5. If you could change one thing about volunteerism in your community, what would it be?

*Copyright 2016 Arizona Board of Regents for Arizona State University.
Permission is hereby granted for the reproduction of any and all of the report if attributed to the ASU Lodestar Center for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Innovation and the Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism.*



GetInvolved.AZ.gov



Governor's Office
of Youth, Faith and
Family

in collaboration with:

ASU **Lodestar Center**
for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Innovation
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

learn more at lodestar.asu.edu