STACKING UP

How Volunteer Engagement Professionals
Compare with Other Key Staff

Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration
970 Raymond Avenue Suite G-70
St. Paul MN 55108
651.756.8449
www.mavanetwork.org

Karmit Bulman, Executive Director
kbulman@mavanetwork.org

January 2018

MAVA MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY....2

Key Findings....2

INTRODUCTION....4

FINDINGS....5

Comparison of VEPs, HRPs, DDs and PDs Qualifications....5

VEP Inclusion in Leadership Team and Strategic Planning, Salaries and Position Elimination in Tough Budget Times....7

Challenges VEPs Experience and How CEOs Can Contribute to Volunteer Program Effectiveness....16

How Volunteer Engagement Professionals Can Make the Case that They Do Stack-Up....22

How do you drive change? Personal action plan....24

CONCLUSION....26

RELATED RESOURCES....28

ATTACHMENT A....33

2017 Human Resources Comparison Study....33

Acknowledgements....43

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2017, Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA), initiated a study as a result of ongoing feedback from volunteer engagement professionals that their positions are comparable to three other key staff positions in terms of skill set and scope of responsibility, yet there is a lack of equity. We sought to obtain a top-level view on how the VEP is perceived by CEOs in comparison to other similar positions within an organization. Our goal was to learn how to address inequities and challenges faced by VEPs.

A survey was sent to thousands of nonprofit and government organizations. The survey was designed to examine how CEOs recruit, support, and resource four key positions in nonprofit and public sector organizations, so that organizational leaders and other stakeholders can improve practices and make informed decisions. The four positions studied were

Volunteer Engagement Professionals (VEPs)
Development Directors (DDs)
Program Directors (PDs)
Human Resource Professionals (HRPs)

464 CEOs responded to a 22 question survey.

Upon analysis of the surveys, MAVA determined that it was necessary to follow up and interview a diverse group of nonprofit CEOs in order to obtain deeper insight regarding the survey findings. MAVA interviewed 24 CEOs from across North America. Finally, MAVA conducted focus groups with around 50 Minnesota volunteer engagement professionals.

Key Findings

Qualifications and skills considered essential for Volunteer Engagement Professionals (VEPs) are overall similar to those for Human Resource Professional (HRPs), Development Director (DDs) and Program Directors (PDs).
There are some differences related to the size of the organization and environment (urban versus rural).

DDs, PDs and HRPs are more likely to serve on an executive leadership team than VEPs. VEPs are more likely to be on the executive leadership team in smaller organizations than in larger ones.
However, if VEPs would advocate to be placed on the executive leadership team, it could make a difference. In organizations with budgets under $3,000,000, the VEP is often, but not always, on the leadership team. The larger the organization, the less likely a VEP will serve on the executive leadership team.

Although VEPs are more likely to be included in strategic planning than on the executive leadership team, there are diverse opinions for including them or not.

The likelihood of VEPs, HRPs, DDs and PDs being included in the strategic planning process is very similar at about 55% of organizations including each position. Some organizations see it as essential to include VEP in strategic planning. Other organizations do not because:

- Strategic planning is not considered in the scope of a VEP role
- the VEP's scope of responsibility is not seen as high enough to be included; or
- Volunteers are not perceived as impacting the bottom line.

Organizations who included VEPs in planning processes, thought organizations who do not do so do not understand what volunteerism can do for an organization.

VEP salaries are lower in most organizations than those of DDs, HRPs and PDs.
One reason is that the VEP is not seen as equal to DD, HRP and PD professionals in skills and experience. A related reason is that the VEP position is seen as not needing the competency of strategic thinking. A number of CEOs said the reason that VEPs are paid less is that the market allows for them to pay less. Some CEOs cited reasons related to career level (e.g., entry level position) and career path as to why the salary is lower.

Supervising volunteers is also considered less demanding than supervising staff (e.g., no compensation and benefits, legal compliance or requirements). If VEPs would advocate for higher salaries and have a more professional image, it could make a difference in salary level. However, a few CEOs reported they do pay VEPs at a similar or higher rate to DDs, HRPs and PDs within their organization.

VEPs are more likely to be eliminated during difficult budget times.
Based on survey responses, CEOs who said VEPs would be the first position to be eliminated often are with organizations that are less dependent on volunteers or who did not see a connection between volunteers and fundraising. Five CEOs who have been faced with this decision said they did not cut the VEP first. Some other CEOs said they would not cut VEP position first and thought CEOs who would don't recognize how essential volunteers are to organizational mission.

CEOs identified issues and challenges that VEPs face in comparison with other professionals.
In comparison to HRPs, DDs and PDs, CEOs that completed the survey believe VEPS are most likely to experience: high turnover, unwillingness to make the job full-time, or a combination of two positions. Most CEOs recognized that non-VEP staff don't understand what the VEP position entails and that VEPs often feel siloed and not valued.

CEOs noted the misperception that volunteers are easy to recruit and retain.
Based on survey findings, CEOs also noted that their other job responsibilities stand in the way of allowing them to provide full support for the volunteer program and that the volunteer program is perceived to do well on its own.

There are varying perspectives on the extent of the challenges VEPs experience and the reason so many challenges exist.

In the interviews, some CEOs reported that, in their organization, volunteers and VEPs are valued and do not have the challenges described in other organizations. Other CEOs said the VEP's challenges are similar to other employees' challenges; this is what happens when work is siloed. However, most CEOs reported they agreed that VEPs have many unique challenges. The most common one cited is that other staff do not see the value of volunteers. A related underlying cause that several CEOs cited is that working with volunteers is different from working with staff; some employees don't like working with volunteers. A number of CEOs thought the challenges are due to CEOs not doing as much as they could to make the environment supportive of volunteers. They also suggested that VEPs could do more to earn respect.

CEOs can significantly contribute to volunteer program effectiveness.
Advice from CEOs to other CEOs is to:

- Articulate your support regarding the value of volunteers to the organization and show the value of the VEP position.
- Show your support through actions.
- Structure the VEP position in the organization so that it has a high scope of responsibility, is considered to have strategic responsibilities and is linked both with development and mission accomplishments.
- Involve volunteers at higher levels and throughout the organization.
- Invest more resources in volunteerism.
- Invest in training for the VEP, staff and volunteers.
- Consider language changes;

  Eliminate "volunteer program. Volunteers are a critical resource, like staff.

  "Time donors instead of volunteers

  "Volunteer Engagement Professionals" not "coordinators

INTRODUCTION

In June 2017, Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA), initiated a study as a result of ongoing feedback from volunteer engagement professionals that their positions are comparable to three other key staff positions in terms of skill set and scope of responsibility, yet there is a lack of equity. We sought to obtain a top-level view on how the VEP is perceived by CEOs in comparison to other similar positions within an organization. Our goal was to learn how to address inequities and challenges faced by VEPs. A survey was sent to thousands of nonprofit and government organizations. The survey was designed to examine how CEOs recruit, support, and resource four key positions in nonprofit and public sector organizations, so that organizational leaders and other stakeholders can improve practices and make informed decisions. The four positions studied were Volunteer Engagement Professionals (VEPs), Development Directors (DDs), Program Directors (PDs) and Human Resource Professionals (HRPs). 464 CEOs responded to a 22 question survey (survey questions in Attachment A). Upon analysis of the surveys, MAVA determined that it was necessary to follow up and interview a diverse group of nonprofit CEOs in order to obtain deeper insight regarding the survey findings. MAVA interviewed 24 CEOs from across North America. Finally, MAVA conducted focus groups with around 50 Minnesota volunteer engagement professionals.

Over three-quarters of respondents were nonprofit, and slightly above 15% were government/public service organizations. Responding organizations were in the fields of education, elder care, healthcare, housing, human services, civil rights, faith-based, legal and youth. The largest groups represented were the education and human services fields. Most respondents were from large urban areas; others were from small urban and large suburban areas. Rural and small suburban areas made up 15% of the survey respondents. All regions were represented with largest group of respondents were from the Midwest region. The number of employees ranged from under five to over 1,000. The largest number of volunteers in organizations are over 1,000, but organizations had anywhere from under five to over 1,000 volunteers. Budget sizes varied from $500,000 (smallest group) to over $8 million (largest group).

76% of respondents have a designated Volunteer Engagement Professional and a Program Director. 54% have a Human Resources Professional and 60% have a Development / Fundraising Professional. Overall, the highest ranking staff person in each organization tended to be at the organization for less than six years. Upon analysis of the survey data, MAVA determined that it was necessary to follow up and interview a diverse group of nonprofit CEOs in order to obtain deeper insight regarding the survey findings. MAVA interviewed 24 CEOs from across North America. MAVA also held focus groups with around 50 Minnesota volunteer engagement professionals.

North American Regional Representation of the 24 CEOs Interviewed

East Coast	2
Midwest	12
South	2
Southwest	3
West	1
West Coast	3
Canada	1

Annual Organizational Budget of the 24 CEOs Interviewed

$500,000- $999,999	1
$1,000,000- $2,999,999	9
$3,000,000 - $4,999,999	1
$5,000,000- $7,999,999	4
$8,000,000+.	9

FINDINGS

Comparison of VEPs, HRPs, DDs and PDs Qualifications

Qualifications and skills for VEPs are overall seen as similar to those for HRPs, DDs and PDs with some differences.

The survey research asked respondents about the qualifications and skills required for VEPs and other professionals. Response data can be found in Figures 1 and 2.

Qualifications for VEPs are similar to the other three positions with some differences related to the size of the organization and environment (urban versus rural areas).

Regarding advanced degrees:

- Most respondents opined that a Master's Degree is not needed for any of the four positions with the highest percentage (30%) for a program director.
- Respondents from urban areas are slightly more inclined to want a Master's Degree for a VEP.

There are slight variations between other required skills for the four positions:

- Respondents opined that all four positions require a person with experience developing community partnerships, building and expanding programs, success with personnel management, recruitment, selection, placement, training & supervision.
- Three important VEP qualifications are:

  The experience with developing community partnerships

  The experience with building or expanding a program

  Demonstrated success with personnel management
- Out of all four positions, it is most important that Volunteer Engagement Professionals have outstanding written and oral communication skills. Otherwise, all four positions are comparable in terms of skills needed:

  Policy and procedure development and compliance

  Training needs analysis and implementation

  Database tracking and systems skills

  Marketing and design skills

  Effective public speaking.

These skills or abilities are seen to be needed in all four positions.

There are variations among sizes of the organization in experience requirements. The smaller the organizational size in terms of employees, the less likely "the experience with building or expanding a program" is required for VEP qualifications. (e.g., perhaps more specialization for positions at larger organizations). Organizations with small budgets (less than $250,000) demanded all five skills for VEPs.

Overall, the skills deemed essential for VEPs are similar (for the items surveyed) to and more comprehensive than those for Program Directors.

- VEP skills needed surpassed those needed by PDs in all areas deemed essential except for "policy and procedure development."
- "Outstanding written and oral communication skills" and "effective public speaking skills" are essential for VEPs across the board, regardless of staff or volunteer size.
- There is some difference in skills deemed essential based on organizational size.

"Marketing strategy" tends to be more frequently required for organizations with smaller numbers of volunteers, compared to those with larger volunteer sizes.

The organizations with more than 1,000 volunteers want VEPs to possess skills for "database and tracking systems" and "policy and procedure development."

Figure 1 - Qualifications/experiences most essential for senior-level person in each position

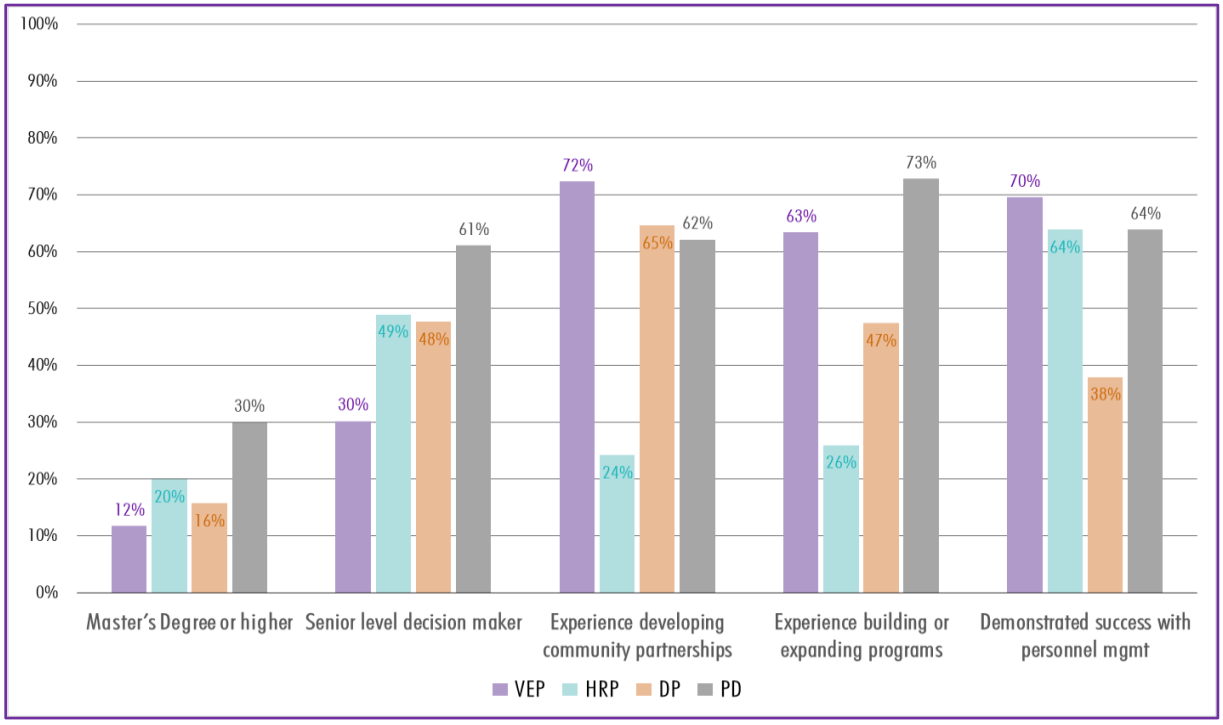
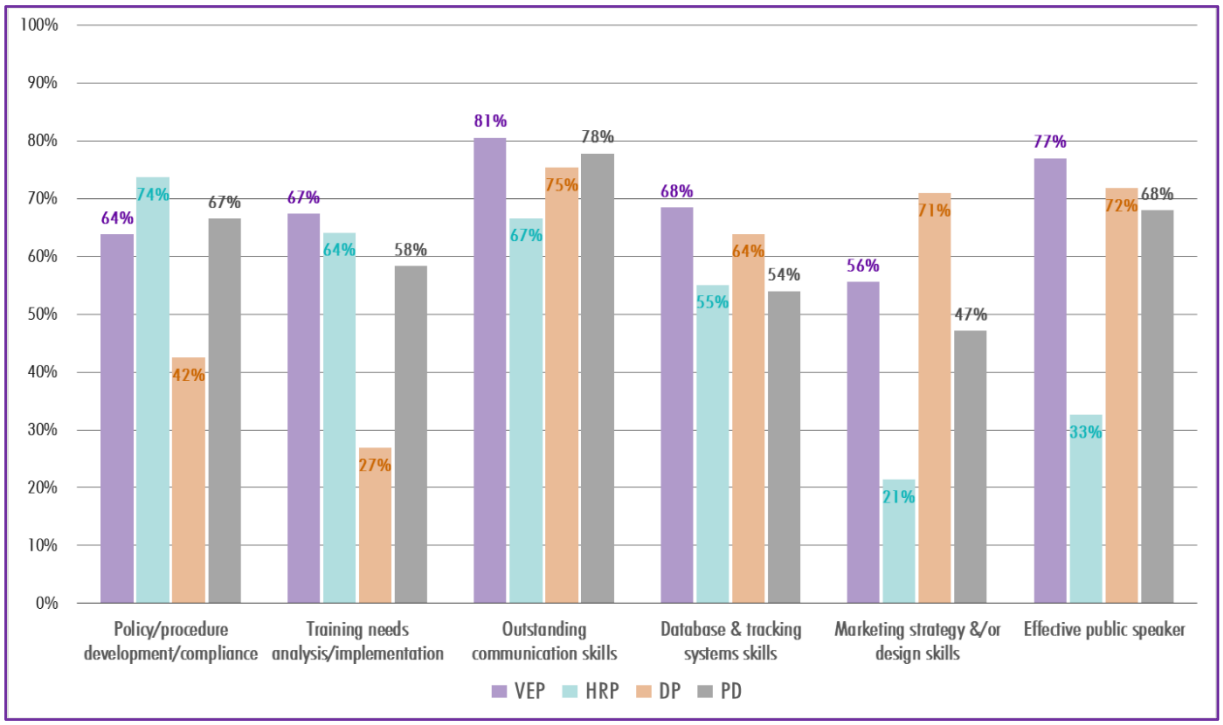


Figure 2. Skills or abilities most essential for senior-level person in each position



VEP Inclusion in Leadership Team and Strategic Planning, Salaries and Position Elimination in Tough Budget Times

DDs, PDs and HRPs are overall more likely to serve on an executive leadership team than VEPs. VEPs are more likely to be on the executive leadership team in smaller organizations than in larger ones.

The survey data stated that, of the four positions that might be asked to serve on the executive leadership team, VEPs are least likely to serve in that capacity. Differences also showed up in requirements to be a senior-level decision maker and being asked to serve on the leadership team.

Many respondents (47%) opined that a VEP does not have to be a senior-level decision maker. The other three positions are more apt to be filled with a senior-level decision maker (PD 69%; DD 63%; HRP 59%). However, CEOs of small urban areas and those from the Midwest are more likely to want a VEP to be a senior-level decision maker.

The CEO interviews explored this topic further and uncovered nuances in the VEPs' inclusion on the executive leadership team. From these interviews, it is discovered:

The VEP tended not to be on the leadership team of organizations with budgets over $3,000,000.

When CEOs are asked, "Why HRPs, DDs and PDs might serve on executive leadership team but not VEPs", only one of the CEOs of larger organizations indicated the VEP is on the leadership team.

> "I am intrigued by study because it raises the point that the VEP is relegated to second class situation status. People in nonprofits don't understand the value of volunteers and economic impact and how it impacts bottom line. Just being asked the question makes me think we have been guilty of that."

Reasons cited for exclusion from the leadership team included:

- Can only have so many at the table.
- Volunteer management is a support function.
- VEP is a day-to-day position.
- VEP is a generalist.
- VEP is represented on leadership team through their supervisor.
- Worried about getting too top heavy.

However, in volunteer-focused organizations, there is not just one director of volunteer services to include on the executive leadership team.

It is a different situation because most staff positions throughout the organization include working with volunteers. Some comments from CEOs stated that:

> "All staff are considered volunteer managers."
>
> "Two-thirds of the staff engage with volunteers. Everything is volunteer driven."

If VEPs would advocate for being on executive leadership team, it could make a difference.

Several of the CEOs interviewed, indicated that advocacy could make a difference in this position being added to the leadership team. According to those interviewed, VEPs are encouraged to make the case that volunteers increase the bottom line.

> "No one is making the case for VEP to be on the leadership team."
>
> "Convince me the table should be larger."

In organizations with budgets under $3,000,000, the VEP is often, but not always, on the leadership team.

CEOs that had VEPs on the leadership team reported the position is a valued asset. When asked about VEPs serving on the leadership team, CEOs said:

> "That's silly, VEP is on executive team. I would not exclude VEP. Volunteers are glue."
>
> "VEP is on executive leadership team. Volunteer component is essential. We have six departments and volunteers are integral to all departments. We have fundraising volunteers as well as meal delivery volunteers. Fifty-five percent of budget is raised privately. Volunteers help raise these funds. Need buy-in from these volunteers. Buy-in translates to every department. Volunteers are integrated in all departments."

However, CEOs of organizations with a budget under $3,000,000 could also identify reasons why VEPs might not be on the leadership team.

Reasons included:

- Other positions might be revenue producers and have higher value.
- VEP is under-valued and under-recognized.
- Others, who don't have VEP on leadership team, see volunteers as fluff.
- There is a thought that volunteerism is free.

> "Roles and responsibilities don't rise to the level of executive leadership."
>
> "There is a fundamental belief that volunteers are fluff. There is a lack of understanding about how they can achieve strategic priorities."

Although VEPs are more likely to be included in strategic planning than on the executive leadership team, there are diverse opinions about including them.

The likelihood of VEPs, HRPs, DDs and PDs being included in the strategic planning process is very similar.

From the survey, we learned that HRPs and DPs are only slightly more likely to be involved in the strategic planning process. Inclusion of VEPs in strategic planning is higher among smaller organizations in terms of staff size and budget. In particular, in organizations with up to five employees, when asked "which of these positions (if applicable) are involved in the strategic planning process," the results are almost identical:

55% Volunteer Engagement Professional

56% Human Resource Professional

55% Development/Fundraising Professional

55% Program/Service Director

To explore this further, in the CEO interviews CEOs were asked, "Why are VEPs less likely to be included in strategic planning processes or included in the written strategic plan?" The answers are summarized as follows:

Some organizations see it as essential to include the VEP in strategic planning.

For these organizations, volunteerism is considered important and the VEP is logically considered to be part of the strategic planning team. Noteworthy comments from these CEOS that illustrate this point are as follows:

"Our VEP is included, and is asked to contribute in terms of how volunteers can support all aspects of the organization. Our VEP is also responsible for her own section in the strategic plan."

"All VEP staff are on strategic planning committees; the volunteer voice is heard on many levels. As important as social workers, dieticians, finance people, department heads – all voices bubble up. VP of volunteer services attends board meetings."

"VEP should always be part of strategic planning process. There are some organizations who would fold without volunteers but not their organization. Her organization includes volunteerism in plan because volunteers are seen as integral to scaling their mission."

Other organizations do not include VEPs in the strategic planning process because their role is not seen high enough to be included or volunteers are not perceived as impacting the bottom line.

In most of the organizations where the VEP is not included in strategic planning, the main reason given is that their position is at a lower level in the organizations, the VEP is not included because volunteers are organization and is viewed to be more about implementation than strategy. In a few other organizations, the VEP is not included because volunteers are not looked in terms of having a cost factor.

"Do you go all the way down in the organization to do strategic planning?"

"Is volunteer work about strategy or tactical deployment? If it is only about deployment then VEP is not included."

"VEP and volunteers don't rise to executive level. We don't look at VEP in executive light. Would need broader skill set from VEP to put that person on executive team or add them in strategic planning process."

"Volunteerism and VEPs are forgotten; not a consideration because there is not cost factor; think of volunteerism as free. We value that the community is included, but we don't think of it as a business component. We don't recognize the essential nature of volunteerism."

Organizations that included VEPs in the planning process thought organizations that did not do so do not understand what volunteerism can do for an organization.

"Volunteerism is included in strategic plan. It would be insanity not to include VEP and volunteerism in strategic planning."

"There is a lack of understanding about what volunteerism can do for an organization. There is nothing about volunteerism in University nonprofit management curriculum."

"If your mission includes volunteers, why would you exclude VEPs? Maybe CEOs don't have that understanding."

"Lack of vision. VEP can get us to a different level; help mold vision. VEPs lead strategic initiatives."

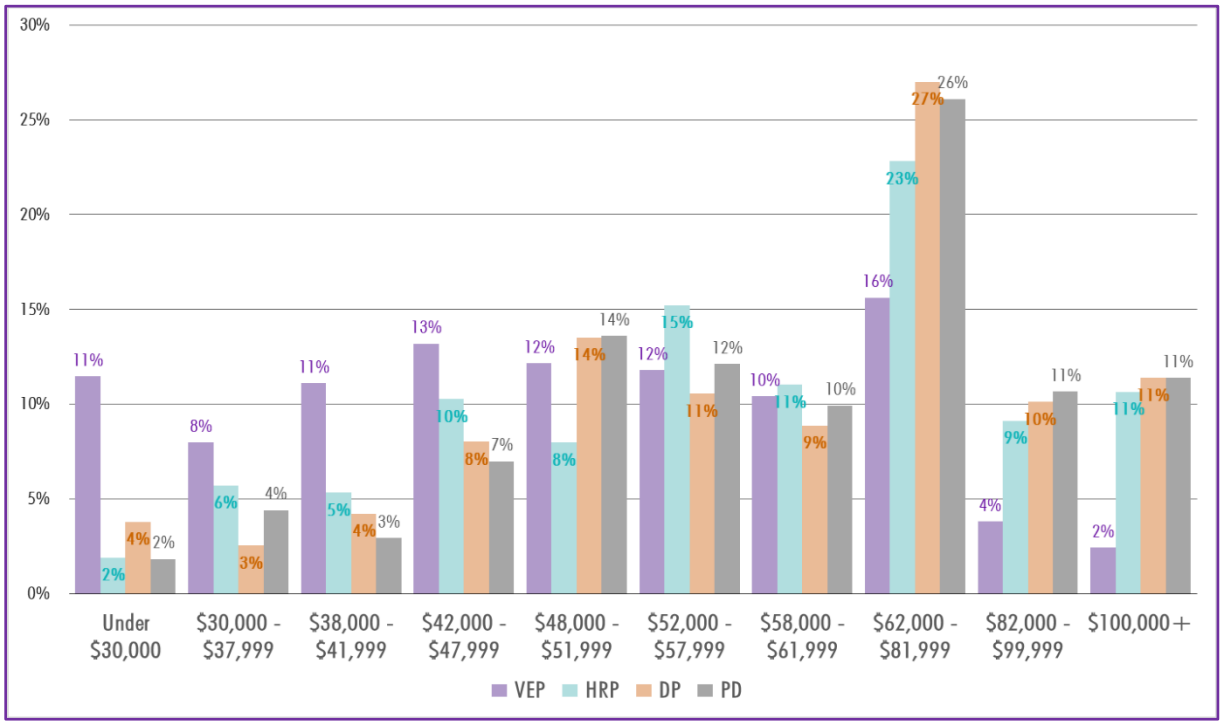
VEP salaries are lower in most organizations than HRPs, DDs and PDs.

Overall the perception of the appropriate salary range for VEPs is lower than those for HRPs, DPs, and PDs.

As shown in Figure 3, the survey data found:

- The top salary range believed appropriate for VEPs is $62,000- $81,999 and the second most appropriate salary range is believed to be under $30,000. The top salary deemed to be appropriate for the other three positions, by a very significant margin, is $62,000- $81,999.
- Organizations serving rural, small suburban, and small urban areas report lower salaries for VEPs, compared to those serving large suburban and urban areas.
- Small organizations (by budget and staff size) report very low salary expectations for VEPs, while large organizations report somewhat higher salary ranges, albeit they are lower than those for HRPs and DDs.
- Most respondents from organizations with higher budgets do not believe that all four salaries should be comparable.

Figure 3 - Salary range believed appropriate for the senior-level person in each position.



The CEO interviews provided insights on why VEP salaries are lower than the three other positions. Some organizations, however, bucked this trend. The CEOs are asked "If skills needed for all four positions are similar, why do CEOs respond that VEPs can be paid less?" and "What are the underlying causes for lower salary for VEPs vs. the other three positions?"

One main reason for lower salaries is that the VEP is not seen as equal to HRP, DD and PD positions in skills and experience. This clearly contradicts responses to a survey question which showed that most CEOs view skills sets needed for all four positions as similar.

A number of CEOs reported that they did not see the VEP position value as equal to the other positions, with one stating they

> "Don't think the skill level is the same for the four positions".

Interview responses revealed that some of the CEOs saw the VEP in a profession without a body of knowledge and certification which resulted in lower pay. Several CEOs noted that VEPs don't need organizational, financial, or quantitative knowledge, a deep knowledge of business, or integrating systems.

> "VEP is seen as an entry level position and does not possess its own skill set."
>
> "No degree in volunteer coordination - compensation is reflected this way."
>
> "Basic skills are similar but other positions require extra certification. I didn't know there is a certification for VEPs."
>
> "There is probably a body of professional compliance knowledge that is required so that might justify higher salary for HRP."

Part of the reason the position is considered to need less knowledge, skills or abilities is the way that many organizations define the position at a level that does not involve strategic thinking or a broad scope of responsibility.

While some CEOs saw the organizational value of creating the position at a higher level that required strategic thinking that, in turn, justifies a higher salary, other CEOs did not. The VEP is seen as an entry-level position, not as a strategic position dealing with complex issues. Many CEOs felt that VEPs have a narrow scope of responsibility.

> "They are volunteer coordinators, not managers or directors."
>
> "Don't think skill level is same for all four people. VEP is more external; different skill set than HRP, DD or PD. Strategic thinking, planning, resources for organization all required for director level, but not for VEP. Front-line execution of strategy is needed for VEP."

The interviews revealed that some feel the pay discrepancy might stem from the connection of VEPs with volunteers (who are seen as free or not dependable).

> "Because volunteers are donated time. Culturally, the birth of volunteers came through a different route, not a business route."
>
> "There is a perspective of volunteer programs as second class citizens; volunteers often don't show up. They may be great when they do show up. This results in lower salaries for VEPs."

However, several CEOs said it is a misperception that the position does not take high-level skills.

> "It is easy to say anyone who can talk to people can be a VEP; not anyone can create a program and lay groundwork but it's easy to think this is the case. Therefore we don't have to pay as much."

A number of the CEOs said the reason that VEPs are paid less is that the market allows them to do that.
Some of the CEOs said that due to market availability they are able hire VEPs at a lower salary level than other positions. The following statements provide more insight to this consideration:

> "Because we can pay less!"
>
> "100 applications for VEP. Not so for PD or HRP."
>
> "Market allows us to pay VEP less. They did a study about this and market allows it."
>
> "For HRP, it is very hard to find someone with a Master's in Public Administration; HRPs need specialized knowledge. Market would segregate HRP from VEP. Has had VEPs who are varied in background (horticulturalist, marketer). Not so with HRP."
>
> "Look at women and people of color are traditionally underpaid. VEPs suffer from the same type of discrimination. What will the market bear?"

Several organizations said that they use national benchmarks to substantiate and the VEP has a lower benchmark in the market. One CEO stated:

> "We benchmark nationally and against similar jobs; also our industry has benchmarking. I would pay them more if there is a higher benchmark from the outside."

Some CEOs cited reasons related to career level and career path for lower salaries.
It is mentioned that VEPs are often younger and early in their career. Also, there is a lack of career path to move up.

- "VEPs are often younger - just starting out."
- "VEP person comes in as VEP; not a lot of career mobility whereas education person can move up to new positions."
- "Not a clear path for how you become a VEP. Oftentimes volunteers move up, could be past HR person. Not a long history of volunteer coordination."

Other CEOs indicated that supervising volunteers is considered to be different from supervising staff as a reason for lower pay.

- "Volunteer director may have 200 volunteers but they may not equate to full-time employees. It all really comes down to volunteers vs. staff."
- "VEP at a certain scale do management that is different than staff management. Removal of staff is different than removal of volunteers in terms of legal and other ramifications."

If VEPs would advocate for salaries and have a more professional image, it could make a difference in salary level.
Several CEOs said that VEPs need to advocate more, measure return on volunteer investment and tell the story of how volunteers save money. Another CEO stated that the lower salaries are related to the professional image VEPs give.

> "VEPs often don't take themselves seriously; do we put on a professional image?"
>
> Volunteer Programs don't do a good job of showing impact to the bottom line. Volunteerism is looked at as being an informal program."

"Generally we need more advocacy; VEPs are undervalued. Need to tell the story that volunteers save money. Without volunteers, we would need twice as much funding to run our program. Need to do return on volunteer investment and promote this. Invest more in VEPs in order to gain more return."

A few CEOs reported paying VEPs at a similar or higher level.

For these CEOs there is no question the VEPs should be paid on par with other key staff.

"VP of volunteer services has a staff of eight and 5,000 volunteers. She is in top three paid staff."

"Shocked and bewildered by the fact that VEPs are paid less. This shows a lack of vision. If we didn't have volunteers we wouldn't be successful. VEP paid better than most staff; she can mobilize efforts that change direction; we pay her accordingly."

"There is equity at our organization. VEP is at director level."

One interview indicated an awakening of the importance of volunteers to the organization which might mean needing to hire at a higher level of position.

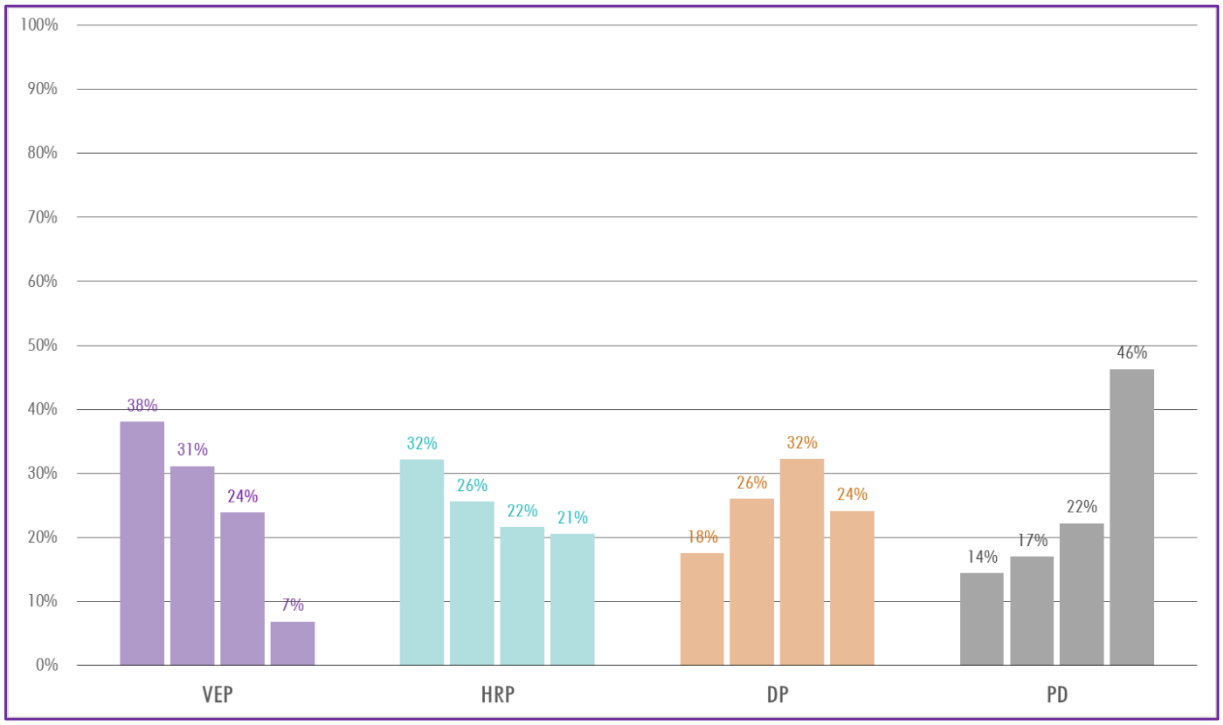
"We need to double or more the number of volunteers we have. Availability of volunteers is going down. We need to go back to our core of recruiting volunteers. We will hire a senior leadership person to bench mark and build our volunteer program."

According to the survey, VEPs are more likely to be eliminated during difficult budget times than the other three positions.

The survey responses shown in Figure 4 indicated the following:

- During difficult budget times, VEP positions would be eliminated before the other three positions.
- Very few CEOs chose VEPs to be the last one to be let go of the four positions.
- The higher the organization's budget, the more likely the respondent indicated that the VEP position would be eliminated first. The organizations with budgets under $250,000 showed less of an inclination to eliminate VEPs first.

Figure 4. Order of elimination during difficult budget times from 1st to 4th to go



However, when this topic was asked in CEO interviews, it turned out that it is not so certain that VEPs would be eliminated first. When actually faced with the decision, some of the CEOs realized the importance of keeping the VEP. CEOs are asked, "Why, during difficult budget times, are VEP positions eliminated before the three other positions?"

Some CEOs cited reasons why VEPs would be first to go in tough budget times.

The CEOs who said VEPs would be first to go often are with organizations that are less dependent on volunteers or who did not see a connection between volunteers and fundraising. Some saw the VEP role as one that could assumed by other positions or thought the volunteers will always be there.

"VEP would go first. Relative value question. All the positions have value. Value is there but there has to be prioritization. We can survive without volunteers."

"Volunteers don't generate revenue so VEP may be first to go. Program people core to mission."

"All about lack of value placed on volunteers. There is a sense that volunteers will always be there. Management of volunteers is not seen as important as dollars or programs. There is a sense that we can get just as much out of them if I don't have a volunteer coordinator."

Five CEOs who were faced with the decision said they did not cut the VEP first. When discussing this decision, they provided the following observations as to what took place when having to downsize:

"I kept the VEP when eliminating 200 positions. We have way more volunteers than staff. We grew volunteer management when cutting other staff."

"Depends on the circumstances. Volunteers don't organize themselves. I did not eliminate VEP first in the past."

"False premise. I made many cuts, not VEP. Volunteers are donors; they are part of committees and task forces."

"Volunteer director would go last. HR would go before them. Do people really value volunteers and their leaders? When we have had to eliminate staff that work directly with volunteers, our organization suffers."

"Yesterday I laid off HR director; I would not eliminate VEP. We can outsource HR. We can't outsource VEP. Volunteers can go to another organization: we need them here."

A number of CEOs said they would not cut VEP first and thought CEOs who would don't recognize how essential volunteers are to mission.

Reasons cited for not cutting the VEP included the importance of volunteers for fundraising and for delivery of service.

"Not how it happens here. VEPs are the last to be let go. If volunteers don't show up, people don't get fed. Department heads, program directors can't schedule 5,000 people!"

"VEP provides direct service; would not eliminate first. Would touch volunteer side last. Volunteers are essential to the organization."

"Makes no sense. It is because of undervaluing of both the VEP role and volunteers. Not understanding the power and necessity of volunteers."

Challenges VEPs Experience and How CEOs Can Contribute to Volunteer Program Effectiveness

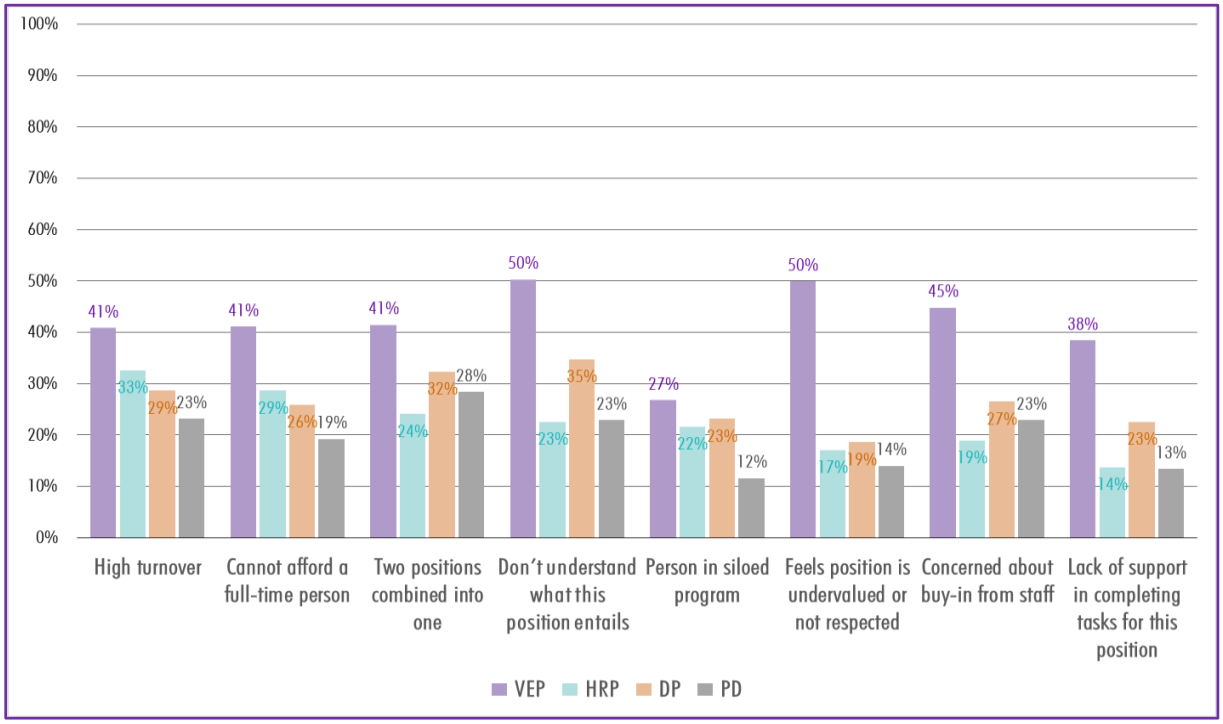
I. CEOs understand that VEPs face a number of challenges.

In the survey, respondents are asked to check boxes that indicate: "Challenges/issues that you believe apply to the most senior-level person in each of these four positions (VEP, HRP, DD and PD)." Of all four positions, CEOs believe that volunteer engagement professionals will experience all challenges/issues listed below in Figure 5 more than the other three positions. Furthermore, the top three challenges include other staff not understanding what the VEP position entails, the VEP position being undervalued or not respected, and lack of buy-in from other staff.

As general tendencies, the challenges that VEPs face vary with organizational size. For example, the larger the organization in terms of employee size, the higher the reporting of high VEP turnover. The VEPs at small organizations most frequently face position-funding issues. Those at mid-size organizations report frequent challenges with gaining appropriate appreciation or respect and support from coworkers. Those at large organizations seem to have frequent concerns for the lack of understanding of the position among staff and the need for staff buy-in.

In the interviews, the CEO perspective on the challenges VEP faced are explored further in the CEO interviews. The CEOs are asked: "CEOs understand the unique challenges facing VEPS so why do the challenges persist?" and "What are the underlying causes for these challenges?"

Figure 5. Challenges/issues for VEPs, HRPs, DDs and PDs

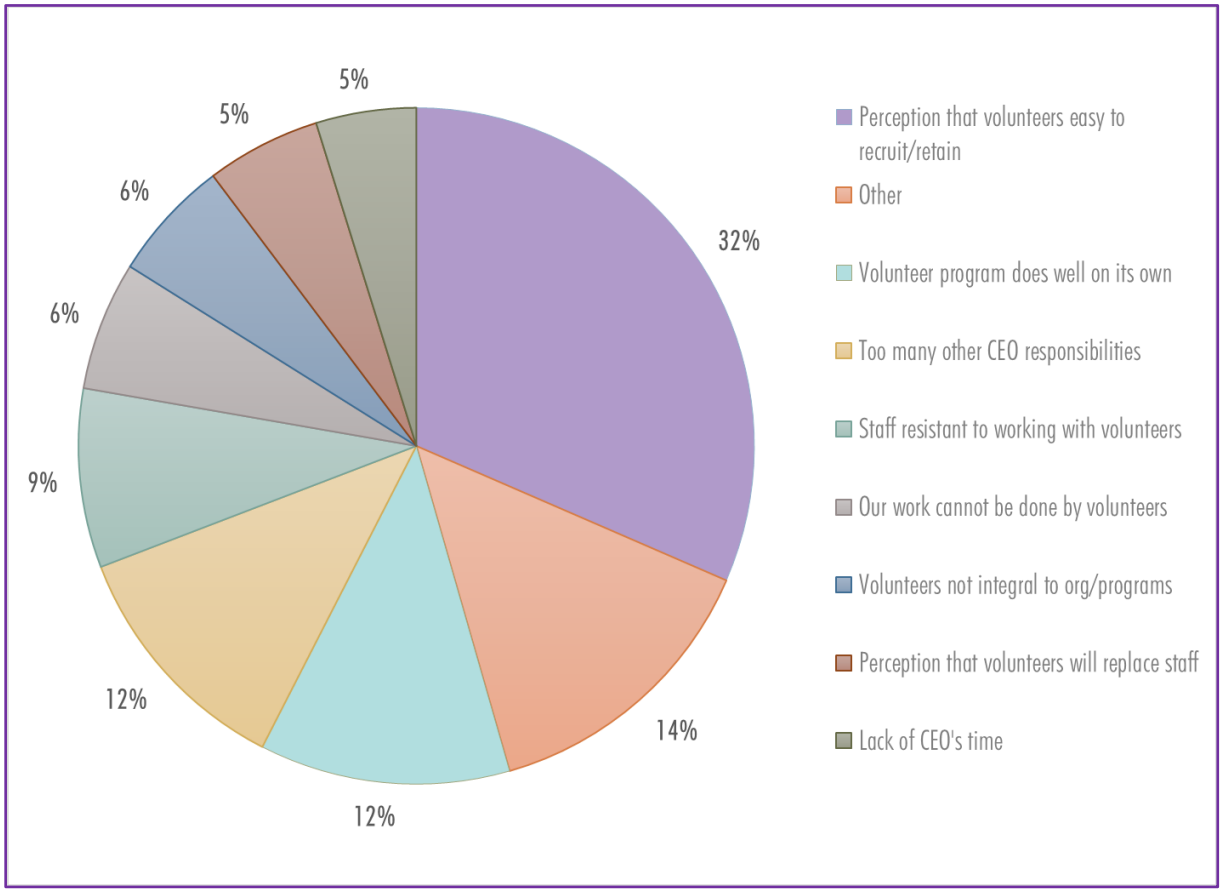


II. The number one challenge CEOs face in supporting their volunteer programs is the perception that volunteers are easy to recruit and retain.

When CEO are asked in the survey, "What do you see as your biggest challenge to support your organization's volunteer program?" the most overwhelming response, as shown in Figure 6, is that volunteers are easy to recruit and retain:

Smaller agencies showed more staff resistance in working with volunteers compared to larger organizations. Also, at small organizations, 12% of respondents picked "too many other CEO responsibilities."

Figure 6. Challenges faced by CEOs



III. Varying perspectives on the extent of challenges VEPs experience and why.

Some CEOs reported that, in their organization, volunteers and VEPs are valued and do not have the challenges described in other organizations.

These CEOs felt the challenges VEPs face are situational and not in the environment of organizations that rely heavily on volunteers and know how important volunteers are.

> "Because we rely so heavily on volunteers, we know how important volunteers are. Every department knows how vital VEPs are."
>
> "It's situational. These challenges are not in our environment. VEP here is very well received. All senior people come to volunteer recognition event."
>
> "We don't have that challenge here."

Other CEOs said VEPs challenges are similar to other departments since that is what happens when work is siloed.

These CEOs recognize that VEPs have a unique set of challenges but every staff person and department has challenges. Given the way nonprofits are structured, departments are siloed, so it is common to think that the role is misunderstood.

> "This is a function of how nonprofits are organized. VEPs are not alone in that perception. Other positions also feel siloed. All staff need to see themselves as part of the whole."
>
> "Every department may at times say no one understands my job."

However most CEOs reported that they agreed that VEPs have many challenges. The most common reason cited is staff do not see the value of volunteers.

These CEOs see that in their organizations the work of volunteers is not valued, so in turn the VEP is not valued. The reason that volunteers are not valued is that the value of volunteers is not communicated from the top; staff don't see a clear return on investment from volunteers.

It is suggested that better return on investment data is needed and that agencies need to identify how the VEP bridges development, program and outreach; this will help the position to be seen as essential. One organization reported that once they had a volunteer work plan, the culture changed and staff saw volunteers as added value.

> "Work they do is not valued, so position is not valued."
>
> "Lack of education on the value VEPs provide. In medium-sized organizations everyone sees the value of the VEP. If you don't value volunteers, you're not going to value the person in charge of them."
>
> "If you don't see return on investment, you are going to value the position less. DD has obvious ROI; it's tangible. Level of volunteers not as easy to see or feel as part of resources of organization; not as visible. Dollars are more visible."

A related underlying cause that several CEOs cited is that working with volunteers is different from working with staff and some staff don't like working with volunteers.

Working with volunteers is seen as different in terms of availability and accountability. Some managers are uncomfortable or don't have expertise working with volunteers. Volunteers are seen as more trouble than they are worth.

> "VEPs get blamed for volunteers that don't work out. Volunteers are sometimes seen as an annoyance and not help"
>
> "Volunteers are seen as more trouble than it is worth. Staff would rather do it themselves."
>
> "Managers are reticent to work with volunteers. This is why there is no buy-in from other staff. Other staff are uncomfortable with volunteers who don't have expertise. It's too much effort."

One CEO said this is similar to other forms of discrimination.

> "Parallel to discrimination of people of color. We have created a second class citizen dynamic. VEPs have not been included. Need to hear these perspectives. Need to make space for VEPs."

Several CEOs saw that the challenges are due to organizational structure.

The challenges mentioned included that the VEP is a role like HRP across the organization, but it is siloed into a one-person role and can lead to misunderstanding of the position. If the VEP is not on the executive leadership team, how they structurally fit in is unclear.

> "It has to do with structure of the organization. If they are left out of executive meetings, where do they fit in? Staff need to interact regularly with VEP. Doesn't make sense to exclude her or misunderstand her position."

One CEO saw the value in more advocacy resources to elevate the field.

The volunteer engagement field does not have the external organization to advocate and position the field as Development, HRP and other professions have.

> "More advocacy is needed. There is a Center for Volunteer Management at the University in Houston which helps VEPs to elevate field. More resources like this are needed."

A number of CEOs thought the challenges are due to CEOs not doing as much as they could to make the environment supportive of volunteers.

Some CEOs said that the challenges start from the top down. They said CEOs could do more to articulate a culture that values volunteers and uses strategic thinking and innovation to see how volunteers could transform the organization. One suggestion is to watch language like "staff lounge" versus "team member lounge" to show commitment to inclusion of volunteers.

> ***"It's cultural due to the attitude of the CEO and leadership staff. The CEO's attitude makes a big difference."***
>
> "CEOs don't do a good job of creating a culture of volunteer appreciation and voicing it in a consistent manner."

"CEOs should make a conscious choice to make an environment that values volunteers and their contributions. Are volunteers active partners? If so, VEPs will be more integrated and less challenged as a staff member."

CEOs also suggested that VEPs could do more to earn respect.
VEPs are often dismissed as only administrative professionals and the skills and strategy that go into the position is not seen. VEPs need to do more to sell and promote the value of volunteers. They need to communicate the skill and strategy that it takes to be successful in the position.

"What are VEPs not doing to get that level of support and recognition? Have they earned that respect? If there is always a volunteer available, why not have a volunteer VEP?"

"The great VEPs are ambassadors for their program and create program structure. They are good at engaging people but aren't good at selling, promoting, and creating deeper infrastructure. It takes a lot of skills to win people's hearts and minds; recognizing, supervising, etc."

"VEP requires a person who has an art and a gift. People dismiss VEP because they come across as "nice" and don't understand the skill, strategy that goes into the position."

"People don't want to take time to invest in volunteers; they don't see the bigger picture in ROI with volunteers; people are racing to get the work done; it will take lots of work for the VEP to convince other staff that it is worth it."

"VEP requires a person who has an art and a gift. People dismiss VEP because they come across as 'nice' and don't understand the skill."

CEOs can significantly contribute to volunteer program effectiveness.
In the CEO interviews, CEOs are asked, "What can you as CEO do to increase the effectiveness of the volunteer program?" The CEOs had a number of recommendations that ranged from articulating the value of volunteers to how to structure the position.

Articulate CEO support of the value of volunteers to the organization and the value of the VEP position.
Most of the CEOs said that it is essential to visibly show support for the value of volunteers and the value of the volunteer programs. The first step in valuing the VEP role is to value the contributions volunteers make towards the mission. Communication of the value of volunteers should be provided to the Board, staff and the community with the aim of creating a culture that values volunteers.

"Help team understand the qualifications and experience of volunteers. Be a public face to volunteers. Translate the work of volunteers to the organization. Be an advocate."

"I carry the business card of our VEP; I am a shameless promoter of volunteerism and the VEP. I talk about volunteerism at staff meeting."

Show your support through actions. Interact with volunteers. Listen to volunteers and recognize them.

CEOs said it is important to show support of volunteers through actions. Those actions include talking with volunteers to learn directly from them about volunteerism at the organization, being seen with volunteers and recognizing volunteers personally and publically.

> "I interact a lot with volunteers; when people see CEO doing that, they see that it is important."
>
> "Understand volunteer needs; advocate for volunteers. Shout out to volunteers who give the most time. Lunch with volunteers and CEO."

Structure the VEP position in the organizations where it is understood to be strategic and linked both with development and accomplishing the mission.

CEOs advised others to:

- Redefine what the VEP is expected to do. Look at automation to make the VEP job less clerical. Position the VEP as a subject matter expert.
- Make the position essential by articulating the connection between volunteers and development and the strategic role of volunteers with programs and outreach.
- Have the VEP on the executive team and integral to all teams that use volunteers.
- Look at how the position is titled. Identify them proudly as a Volunteer Engagement Professional.

> "Agency needs to identify that the VEP bridges development and program and outreach. This position needs to be seen as essential."
>
> ***"Listen to VEP. Rely on them."***

To realize the potential of volunteers, involve volunteers at higher levels and throughout the organization.

CEOs advised that an essential part of both elevating the role of the VEP and realizing the potential of volunteers is to use volunteers throughout the organization and especially at higher levels. Several CEOs said that they expect all staff to work with volunteers and support volunteerism.

> "Make sure to use volunteers at a higher level; this leverages talent to advance programs. Great resource to achieve vision."
>
> "CEO should think about more non-traditional ways volunteers can invest in. Put more volunteer resources at a higher level in the organization."
>
> "Make sure all staff include volunteer engagement into their work plans."
>
> "People are out there to help with every organizational task."

To realize the potential of volunteers it will also take an investment in volunteerism.

CEOs recognized that it will take an investment in planning and budget to achieve the benefits volunteers can bring to the organization. Several CEOs talked about the importance of paying VEPs well. It is advised to have the VEP as a full-time position and not part of another position.

> "Fair and equitable salaries and benefits for VEPs."
>
> "We pay over the market rate for VEPs."
>
> "Budget enough funds for volunteer program."

Consider language changes; eliminate "volunteer program". Volunteers are a critical resource, like staff. "Time donors" instead of "volunteers". "Volunteer Engagement Professionals" not "coordinators."

Invest in training for the VEP, staff and volunteers. A number of CEOs talked about the importance of training. They encouraged having the VEP access professional development to build awareness of best practices and to have VEPs access the credentialing opportunities available. It is also encouraged to train staff on engaging volunteers. As an example, an organization advised to have the VEP train staff at a staff meeting. CEOs encouraged including volunteers in all internal professional development offered. Several CEOs encouraged investing in doing the Service Enterprise Initiative through Points of Light as a means to take the organization to a next level of volunteer engagement.

"Increased training for VEP and volunteers and other staff who engage with volunteers."

"Expose that individual (VEP) to training programs to raise their level of entrepreneurial and management skills."

"Biggest piece is to do Service Enterprise."

How Volunteer Engagement Professionals Can Make the Case that They Do Stack-Up.

Over fifty volunteer engagement professionals in Minnesota gathered in December 2017 to learn about the results of the survey and interviews and to strategize about advocacy action volunteer engagement professionals need to take in order to address the issues that surfaced. They began by asking questions such as:

- How do we make the case that it is best for the organization that VEPs be included on senior leadership teams and integrated fully into organizational strategic planning?
- How can we set professional standards so that not just anybody can do this job?
- How can we influence and inform the human resources industry to properly elevate and price volunteer engagement jobs?
- How can we help to make the shift from being seen as clerical (doers only) to highly skilled strategy oriented professionals with a high scope of responsibility?
- How can we move towards salary equity? Nurses and teachers have had similar struggles-what can we learn from them?
- How do we advocate so that upper management and boards of directors fully understand the scope, depth and breadth of the work we do?
- How can we share return on volunteer investment and related data so that everyone in the organization understands the impact of volunteers?
- How do we move beyond advocacy within our field? Can we move towards advocacy in the broad nonprofit world? Human resources? Philanthropy? Government?

The time has come for a call to action. Many strategies surfaced for action that can be taken on a personal, organizational, local, statewide and national level. Action items are included below in an action plan template. While most CEOs acknowledged that action and culture change must come from the top level of management and leadership in the organization, there was also a clear call for volunteer engagement professionals to advocate more vocally for changes designed to elevate their professional roles.

Many CEOs did not know that credentialing exists in the volunteer engagement leadership field. A first step for VEPs may be to let your organizational leadership know that there is in fact a certification in volunteer administration; a second step would be to pursue this certification. On both a local and national level, there are many professional development opportunities. Contact ALIVE, VolunteerMatch or the Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration for further information. Within your own organization, you can also reshape your work image to be seen as a strategic leader and you can advocate to upgrade your position in the organization.

Within your own organization, you can:

- Reshape your work image to be seen as a strategic leader.
- Advocate to upgrade your position in the organization.
- Apply to participate in the service enterprise certification program.
- Discuss with the top decision-maker how the volunteer program voice can be best represented in organizational decision-making and on the executive leadership team.
- Share this report throughout the organization.
- Work to create understanding at the organization that volunteer management is a professional field with a body of knowledge, academic coursework and credentials.
- Create documents for staff about volunteer engagement and outcomes.

It is highly recommended that you provide training to other staff on volunteer engagement best practices. It is also important that you institute measurement of volunteer engagement and report on the outcomes to all organizational stakeholders.

On a local level, you might consider attending a professional networking group, joining a networking committee, start a working group on salary equity and sharing the Stacking Up Report in your local community.

At the state level you could work to pass a volunteerism Bill, join the board of a statewide volunteer engagement organization, work to keep volunteerism as a measure of statewide health and well-being and share this report through statewide organizations.

Nationally, joining the national conversation by joining AL!VE, working on national public policy initiatives, helping to plan a National Summit on volunteer engagement and sharing this report nationally could make a big difference for the volunteer engagement field.

How do you drive change? Personal action plan.

Please check areas where you will work on driving change:

Personal Professional Action:

Action	When
☐ Earn MAVA Certificate in Leadership of Volunteers through taking the Volunteer Impact Leadership Training Series.	
☐ Earn the national CVA credential.	
☐ Commit to attending at least three trainings a year to advance skills in the field of volunteerism.	
☐ Reshape my work image to be seen as a strategic leader.	
☐ Other	

Organizational Action:

Action	When
☐ Advocate to upgrade my position in the organization.	
☐ Create awareness that organizations who place their volunteer management position at the level of strategy development realized more benefits through volunteerism than organizations who have the position as implementing more routine tasks.	
☐ Enroll my organization in the next service enterprise cohort.	
☐ Discuss with my organization's top decision-maker how the volunteer program voice can be best represented in organizational decision-making and on executive leadership team.	
☐ Share the Stacking Up report throughout my organization.	
☐ Create understanding at the organization that volunteer management is a professional field with a body of knowledge, academic coursework and credentials.	
☐ Provide training to other staff on volunteer engagement best practices.	
☐ Create documents for staff about volunteer engagement and outcomes.	
☐ Institute measurement of volunteer engagement; report on the outcomes.	
☐ Create internal task force to assess volunteer engagement and formalize policy and procedures.	
☐ Other	

Local Change:

Action	When
☐ Attend professional networking group.	
☐ Join a networking committee.	
☐ Start a working group on Salary equity.	
☐ Share the Stacking Up Report in my local community.	
☐ Other	

Statewide Change:

Action	When
☐ Help your state pass a volunteerism Bill.	
☐ Join the Board of a statewide volunteer engagement organization.	
☐ Work to keep volunteerism as a measure of statewide health and well-being.	
☐ Share the Stacking Up report through statewide organizations.	
☐ Other	

National Change:

Action	When
☐ Join the national conversation by joining AL!VE.	
☐ Work on national public policy initiatives.	
☐ Help plan a National Summit on volunteer engagement.	
☐ Share the Stacking Up report nationally.	
☐ Other	

CONCLUSION

Input from almost 500 top decision-makers and 50 volunteer engagement professionals in nonprofit and governmental organizations, confirmed that there is work to be done so that volunteer engagement professionals "stack up" with human resource, development and program professionals. Many volunteer engagement professionals stress that they have experienced inequities in their employment experience. The findings in this study confirm the experience many have shared. There are some interesting contradictions that surfaced in the study as well. Like all inequities, this subject is complex.

Questions emerged:

- Why, if most CEOs responded that qualifications and skill sets considered essential for VEPs are similar to those for HRPs, DDs and PDs, are Volunteer Engagement Professionals paid less?
- Why are the three other positions more likely to serve on an executive leadership team?
- Why are strategic decision-making and planning not considered an essential element of job responsibility for VEPs?
- Why is volunteerism not consistently included in organizational strategic plans?
- CEOs reported that their VEP is doing an excellent job and that volunteerism is essential to the mission of the organization.
- Why then is the VEP job often seen as clerical with a limited scope of responsibility?
- Why does volunteerism fail to rise up to the executive and strategic level?

It is clear that both VEPs and top decision makers have work to do to address contradictions and inequities. CEOs can articulate their support regarding the value of volunteers to the organization and show the value of the VEP position. They can structure the VEP position in the organization so that it has a high scope of responsibility, is considered to have strategic responsibilities and is linked both with development and mission accomplishments. Organizations can involve volunteers at higher levels and throughout the organization; invest more resources in volunteerism and invest in training for the VEP, staff and volunteers.

However, if VEPs would advocate to be placed on the executive leadership team, it could make a difference. In organizations with budgets under $3,000,000, the VEP is often, but not always, on the leadership team. The larger the organization, the less likely a VEP will serve on the executive leadership team.

Although VEPs are more likely to be included in strategic planning than on the executive leadership team, it is still important to work to make sure volunteer engagement professionals and heavily involved in organizational strategic planning and that volunteerism is included as a distinct strategic imperative in the organizational strategic plan.

Since VEP salaries are lower in most organizations than DDs, HRPs and PDs, there is work to be done on salary equity. Both CEOs and VEPs need to work to acknowledge and highlight that strategic thinking and a broad scope of responsibilities is essential for the position. If organizations produce higher level job descriptions and seek director or Vice-President level professionals, they will see a noticeable return on volunteer investment. Several CEOs said the reason that VEPs are paid less is that the market allows them to pay less. Some CEOs cited reasons related to career level and career path for why salary is lower. Hiring a clerical type person and paying them an entry level salary does little to boost sustainable volunteerism.

Also, supervising volunteers is seen as different from supervising staff. Arguably this difference could be a compelling reason to hire the highest level VEP. Many contend that supervising volunteers is more difficult than supervising paid staff. There is a need for the highest skill-set and professionalism in that role.

Survey responses indicated that VEPs are more likely to be eliminated during difficult budget times. This conclusion is a wake-up call! Volunteers do not organize themselves! Volunteers are needed more than ever during difficult budget times. Volunteers are essential to the organizational mission. They need a highly skilled professional on staff in order to assure effectiveness and sustainability.

CEOs identified issues and challenges that VEPs face in comparison with other professionals. In the survey, CEOs believed that VEPS are most likely to experience (in comparison to HRPs, DDs and PDs): high turnover, unwillingness to make the job full-time, or combining two positions. Most CEOs recognized that non-VE staff don't understand what the VEP position entails and that VEPs often feel siloed and not valued. CEOs also acknowledge the responsibility **they** have for working with all staff to see the tremendous value in volunteers and the professionals who lead them. Most CEOs reported they agreed that VEPs have many unique challenges. Most commonly cited is that staff do not see the value of volunteers.

A related underlying cause that several CEOs cited is that working with volunteers is different from working with staff; some staff don't like working with volunteers. A number of CEOs thought the challenges are due to CEOs not doing as much as they could to make the environment good for volunteers. They also suggested that VEPs could do more to earn respect.

In the survey, CEOs noted the misperception that volunteers are easy to recruit and retain. They also said that their other job responsibilities get in the way of allowing them to give full support to the volunteer program; the volunteer program is perceived to do well on its own. There was complete acknowledgement that both CEOs and VEPs can make significant strides to address challenges and inequities. Both can work to demonstrate the value of volunteers to the organization and show the value of the VEP position.

The VEP position can be structured in the organization so that it has a high scope of responsibility, is considered to have strategic responsibilities and is linked both with development and mission accomplishments. Volunteers can be involved at higher levels and throughout the organization. More resources can be invested in volunteerism. More investment is needed in training for the VEP, staff and volunteer. Language changes can be made. Eliminate "volunteer program". Volunteers are a critical resource, like staff. Use "time donors" instead of "volunteers." Change the title to "Volunteer Engagement Professionals" not "coordinators".

There is much to be done to reverse the issues and challenges. The impression that many VEPs have that they don't "stack up" has been confirmed. This is actually good news. We know what we have to do to make changes. It can be done. Let's do it.

MAVA

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

RELATED RESOURCES

1. Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA) Positioning the Profession: Communicating the Power of Results for Volunteer Leadership Professionals, Nora Silver and Margaret Melsh 1999

Page 1

- Survey distributed to over 2000 people and had 210 responses- 1998. Conclusion:
- We need a shift in identity, articulation and behavior. We need to change language away from volunteer to civic participation, public engagement.

Page 2

- Core values which articulate our overarching convictions: The strength of a democratic society rests on the acts of its individual members in service to the society.
- Voluntary action gets things done and produces change.
- Civic participation fills gaps in our social fabric and crates community.
- The participation of volunteers is critical to organizations for accomplishing their mission and ensuring organization survival and vitality.
- An organization must invest in all its people resources and manage them wisely.

Page 9

Six messages for nonprofit Executive Directors and Boards of Directors.

- Volunteers are a critical resource and are almost infinite
- Volunteers go and stay where they are managed well
- Capable volunteer administrators make critical difference in focusing volunteer resources to impact on mission, services and safety.
- When volunteers are well engaged with the organization, they provide invaluable community relations and tangible financial support
- Strong volunteers administrators bring many skills to the whole organization
- The increasing complexity of the work requires a greater investment in the volunteer management process.

2. Volunteer Management Capacity in America's Charities and Congregations: A BRIEFING REPORT; February 2004: The Urban Institute

"Data derived from organizational users of volunteers substantiate the complaints of volunteers about lapses in management. A survey of a representative sample of more than 3,000 U.S. charities revealed that not even half of these entities had implemented eight out of nine recommended practices for the management of volunteers to a large degree (the lone exception is regular supervision and communication with volunteers, adopted by 67%)."

Page 5

"Capacity-Building Options for the Future. Despite the willingness of charities and congregations to take on volunteers, challenges prevent them from meeting their full potential. A number of actions might improve the ability of charities to work effectively with and take on new volunteers."

Page 9

"Use of Staff to Manage Volunteers Lags behind Use of Staff for Fundraising. A comparison with other national research on public charities indicates that the professionalization of volunteer management lags behind the professionalization of fundraising. A little more than half (55 percent) of charities across the United States report that they employ a staff member or consultant whose primary responsibility is fund development or fundraising. In the current research, we learned that 39 percent of charities have a paid staff person who spends at least half of his or her time managing volunteers."

3. An Executive Director's Guide: Strategic Volunteer Engagement: A Guide for Nonprofit and Public Sector Leaders. By Sarah Jane Rehnborg, Ph.D. with assistance from Wanda Lee Bailey, MSW, Meg Moore, MBA and Christine Sinatra, M.PAff

A publication of the RGK Center for Philanthropy & Community Service The LBJ School of Public Affairs The University of Texas at Austin ; May, 2009

Page 5

"When it becomes apparent that effective volunteer engagement requires an investment, especially a financial investment, many nonprofit leaders hit a brick wall."

Page 16

"One of the best ways to prevent resistance to volunteers is to include staff and board members in the planning process from the beginning. Board members, themselves volunteers, may fail to see the connection between their type of governance or policy volunteering and the more direct-service opportunities offered to other volunteers. The planning process acts as an exercise in staff/board development, leading these key stakeholders to begin thinking strategically about volunteers, to articulate a shared language around community engagement, and to explore how volunteers fit within the organization's core values and mission."

Page 18

"Because volunteer engagement does not exist in a vacuum, plans for community involvement should be integrated within the existing strategic plan for your organization's future direction. A guiding vision should be developed into a strategy or mission statement for community engagement, or some other brief document that is circulated and made widely available. This document will guide your efforts and serve as a touchstone when important decisions need to be made. From that statement of vision, a set of clear goals to achieve it should flow naturally. By creating measurable statements of intent, including short-term objectives and long-term anticipated outcomes, the planning committee will define the nature of the work to be accomplished."

4. The Policy Press • 2010 • ISSN 2040 8056
Developing volunteer management as a profession - Steven Howlett

Page 355

"Over the last 10 years, volunteers have reported improved levels of satisfaction with the way their work is organized. This has coincided with developments in the theory and practice of volunteer management. Further initiatives are taking place but need to be set in a wider context. This paper reviews the need for appropriate forms of management and argues that the development of volunteering as a profession offers the best way forward. A professional body would guard the diversity of volunteer involvement and management by putting volunteer managers in control of the way their roles will be developed."

Page 356

"Welcome as they are, these developments need to be seen as part of a wider picture. A recent publication by Rochester (Rochester, C., Ellis Paine, A. and Howlett, S. with Zimmeck, M. (2009) Volunteer and society in the 21st century, Palgrave: Basingstoke) highlights the widespread acceptance of a 'default setting' for the way volunteering is perceived and discussed, which particularly privileges the role it has in the delivery of services. In this setting, volunteers are seen as analogous to other human resources within an organization and in turn this exerts an influence on thinking about how their work is organized and managed. Within the 'workplace model', volunteers are an additional resource complementing the role of paid staff. It is a perfectly legitimate model, but as Rochester et al warn, it is not suitable for all volunteer-involving organizations. There is a real concern that programs to support the development of volunteer management will reflect this view of volunteering alone."

5. Reimagining Service: Converting Good Intentions Into Greater Impact

National Core Capacity Assessment Tool Dataset

"Positive Deviants" in Volunteerism and Service

Research Summary - Research conducted by TCC Group December 2009

Page 9

"When organizations engage AND manage ANY number of volunteers well, they are significantly better led and managed than organizations not engaging volunteers and/or doing so without managing them well. When an organization reaches 50 volunteers AND achieves an effective volunteer management model, not only do they lead and manage their organizations better, but they are also significantly more adaptable (i.e., reflect the capacity to be a learning organization), sustainable and better resourced (i.e., have skills, knowledge, experience, tools, and other resources to do their work)."

6. Volunteer Management Practices and Retention of Volunteers; Mark A. Hager, Jeffrey L. Brudney, June 2004

"Volunteers are valuable human resources. Four out of five charities use volunteers to help them meet organizational needs for service and administration. Most charities could not get by without their volunteers, and they certainly would be less productive and responsive without them. Turnover of volunteers can disrupt the operation of the charity, threaten the ability to serve clients, and signal that the volunteer experience is not as rewarding as it might be. Charities cannot be expected to keep every volunteer, but building volunteer management capacity to involve and retain them makes sense for both charities and the volunteers upon whom they rely. "Some volunteer management practices are important to the operations of charities and some are important for providing good experiences for volunteers. The ones that focus on volunteers are the ones that keep volunteers interested and involved."

7. 12 key actions of volunteer Programs Champions, CEOS Who lead the Way, 2014 Update; Reimagining Service

Successful CEO Champions:

- Have extensive backgrounds serving as volunteers themselves; strong personal philosophy of volunteer engagement.
- Act on the belief that the volunteer engagement strategy is essential to accomplishing the mission and that their support is vital for the strategy's success.
- Hire and support a skilled volunteer manager and understand that the role of this manager is to empower the organization to be successful in engaging volunteers.
- Place the volunteer manager on the management team in order to integrate the volunteer engagement strategy withal efforts to achieve the mission of the organization.
- Contribute to a strong, positive written philosophy statement on the organization's engagement of volunteers.
- Appreciate that volunteer programs are not free; make certain that costs associated with the strategy are reflected in a separate budget or specifically integrated with the overhead of running the organization.
- Give clear expectations to staff for partnering with volunteers and provide support for staff training, recognition and evaluation of that work.
- Volunteers should be involved extensively and creatively at all levels of the organization. CEOs should model good volunteer supervision.
- Foster an integrated approach to volunteer strategy and encourage team efforts between key sections of the organization such as development, community outreach, advocacy and personnel- all of which interface with volunteers.
- Involve Board of Directors in key issues that impact the organization's volunteer engagement strategy.
- See the value of the volunteer strategy as extending services, strengthening the funding base, not just saving money.
- Effectively attract financial resources to support the volunteer engagement strategy.

8. Certified in Volunteer Administration Competency Framework: 2015

Seven Competencies of Volunteer Administration:

- Plan for Strategic Volunteer Engagement
- Advocate for Volunteer Involvement
- Attract and Onboard a Volunteer Workforce
- Prepare Volunteers for their Roles
- Document Volunteer Involvement
- Manage Volunteer Performance and Impact
- Acknowledge, Celebrate and Sustain Volunteer Involvement

9. From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success - Susan J. Ellis, Energize Inc. 1996.

ATTACHMENT A

2017 Human Resources Comparison Study

Welcome!

We are gathering information to examine how CEOs recruit, support, and resource four key positions in non-profit and public sector organizations and how volunteer professionals compare to the three other key positions.

Please answer as accurately as possible. **The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.** Your responses will be anonymous and not associated with your organization.

As a result of your participation, you'll have the opportunity to **sign up to receive the survey results first and/or participate in a follow up phone interview**. Thank you for taking part in this important study.

Please complete your survey by midnight CDT on June 26, 2017.

1. Does your organization have at least one designated person in any of the following positions? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Volunteer Engagement Professional
- ☐ Human Resources Professional
- ☐ Development/Fundraising Professional
- ☐ Program/Service Director

2. How long has the current, highest ranking person in each position been with the organization (if applicable)?

	Volunteer Engagement Professional	Human Resources Professional	Development/ Fundraising Professional	Program/ Service Director
Under 2 years	○	○	○	○
2-3 years	○	○	○	○
4-6 years	○	○	○	○
Over 6 years	○	○	○	○

Staff Qualifications & Expertise

3. Check all of the qualifications/experiences that you believe are most essential for the most senior-level person in each of these four positions:

	Volunteer Engagement Professional	Human Resources Professional	Development/ Fundraising Professional	Program/ Service Director
Master's Degree or higher	☐	☐	☐	☐
Senior-level decision maker	☐	☐	☐	☐
Experience developing community partnerships	☐	☐	☐	☐
Experience building and expanding programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
Demonstrated success with personnel management (recruitment, selection, placement, training, supervision, & motivation)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Staff Skills & Abilities

4. Check all of the skills or abilities that you believe are most essential for the most senior-level person in each of these four positions:

	Volunteer Engagement Professional	Human Resources Professional	Development/ Fundraising Professional	Program/ Service Director
Policy and procedure development and compliance	☐	☐	☐	☐
Training needs analysis and implementation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Outstanding written and oral communication skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
Database and tracking systems skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
Marketing strategy and/or design skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
Effective public speaker	☐	☐	☐	☐

Staff Responsibilities

5. Check all of the responsibilities that you believe apply to the most senior-level person in each of these four positions:

	Volunteer Engagement Professional	Human Resources Professional	Development/ Fundraising Professional	Program/ Service Director
Serving on the leadership/executive team	☐	☐	☐	☐
Disciplining and conducting performance reviews	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community outreach	☐	☐	☐	☐
Report on program progress and numbers to the Board of Directors	☐	☐	☐	☐
Develop and maintain budget	☐	☐	☐	☐
Educate and provide resources to staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
Advise staff in the development of new programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
Develop risk management plan	☐	☐	☐	☐
Establish relationships with external groups and organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communicate outcomes data to appropriate staff for internal publications	☐	☐	☐	☐

Challenges

6. Check all of the challenges/issues that you believe apply to the most senior-level person in each of these four positions:

	Volunteer Engagement Professional	Human Resources Professional	Development/ Fundraising Professional	Program/ Service Director
High turnover	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cannot afford a full-time person	☐	☐	☐	☐
This position is actually two positions combined into one	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other staff don't fully understand what this position entails	☐	☐	☐	☐
The person in this position works in isolation (siloed program)	☐	☐	☐	☐
The person in this position feels the position is undervalued or not respected	☐	☐	☐	☐
The person in this position is concerned about buy-in from other staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
There is a lack of support from coworkers in completing tasks for this position	☐	☐	☐	☐

Salary & Strategy

7. Select the salary range you believe is appropriate for the most senior-level person in each of these four positions:

	Volunteer Engagement Professional	Human Resources Professional	Development/ Fundraising Professional	Program/ Service Director
Under $30,000	○	○	○	○
$30,000 -$37,999	○	○	○	○
$38,000 - $41,999	○	○	○	○
$42,000 - $47,999	○	○	○	○
$48,000 - $51,999	○	○	○	○
$52,000 - $57,999	○	○	○	○
$58,000 - $61,999	○	○	○	○
$62,000 - $81,999	○	○	○	○
$82,000 - $99,999	○	○	○	○
$100,000+	○	○	○	○

8. Which of these positions (if applicable) are...

	Involved in the strategic planning process	Included your written strategic plan
Volunteer Engagement Professional	☐	☐
Human Resources Professional	☐	☐
Development/ Fundraising Professional	☐	☐
Program/Services Professional	☐	☐

Volunteer Engagement

9. During difficult budget times, in which order would you eliminate the four positions listed below?

- ☐ Volunteer Engagement Professional
- ☐ Human Resources Professional
- ☐ Development/Fundraising Professional
- ☐ Program/Service Director

10. How much money does your organization allocate to volunteer involvement (volunteer recruitment, training, reimbursement, supplies, recognition, etc.)?

- ○ Not applicable
- ○ Under $5,000
- ○ $5,000-$9,999
- ○ $10,000-$14,999
- ○ $15,000-$19,999
- ○ $20,000-$29,999
- ○ $30,000-$59,999
- ○ $60,000-$89,999
- ○ $100,000-$199,999
- ○ $200,000 & Over

11. What do you believe are the most important qualities/skills when hiring a volunteer engagement professional? Please check only two:

- ☐ People skills
- ☐ Organizational skills
- ☐ Database skills
- ☐ Commitment to organizational mission
- ☐ Supervisory skills
- ☐ Program development
- ☐ Well-liked by coworkers
- ☐ Knows all aspects of programs
- ☐ Effective trainer
- ☐ Recruitment and retention skills

12. What are two of the most significant things that you do to contribute to the volunteer program's effectiveness?

- ☐ Hire great person & leave him/her alone
- ☐ Provide weekly supervision to volunteer leader
- ☐ Include volunteer leader on leadership/executive team
- ☐ Include volunteerism in all aspects of organizational operation
- ☐ Include volunteerism in strategic planning
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ Provide excellent professional development
- ☐ Highlight volunteerism in all internal/external planning
- ☐ Include volunteers on organizational chart
- ☐ Include engaging with volunteers on all job description
- ☐ Interact regularly with all volunteers

13. What do you see as your biggest challenge to supporting your organization's volunteer program?

- ○ Lack of CEO's time
- ○ Too many other CEO responsibilities
- ○ Volunteer program does well on its own
- ○ Volunteers are not integral to our organization or its mission
- ○ Other (please specify)
- ○ Staff are resistant to working with volunteers
- ○ Perception that volunteers are easy to recruit and retain
- ○ Perception that volunteers will replace staff
- ○ Our work cannot be done by volunteers

Volunteer Program Impact

14. As a whole, how effective do you believe your leader(s) of volunteers is/are in your organization?

○ 1 - Poor ○ 2 - Fair ○ 3 - Good ○ 4 - Excellent

15. What is the value of the volunteer program to your organization?

1 - Not valuable	2	3 - Neutral	4	5 - Very valuable
○	○	○	○	○

Your Organization

16. Please select the category that best describes your organization:

- ○ Non-profit
- ○ Government/Public Service
- ○ Other (please specify)

17. Please select the category that best describes your cause:

○ Education	○ Elder	○ Legal
○ Human Services	○ Youth	○ Healthcare
○ Housing	○ Civil Rights	○ Faith-based

18. Community Size:

○ Large Urban	○ Large Suburban	○ Rural
○ Small Urban	○ Small Suburban	

19. Geographic Region:

○ New England	○ South	○ West Coast
○ East Coast	○ Southwest	
○ Midwest	○ West	

20. Number of paid employees:

○ Under 5	○ 51-75	○ 351-500
○ 6-10	○ 76-100	○ 500-1000
○ 11-30	○ 100-200	○ Over 1000
○ 31-50	○ 201-350	○

21. Number of volunteers:

- ○ Under 5
- ○ 6-10
- ○ 11-30
- ○ 31-50
- ○ 51-75
- ○ 76-100
- ○ 100-200
- ○ 201-350
- ○ 351-500
- ○ 500-1000
- ○ Over 1000
- ○

22. Organizational budget:

- ○ Under $250,000
- ○ $250,000 - $499,999
- ○ $500,000 - $999,999
- ○ $1,000,000 - $2,999,999
- ○ $3,000,000 - $4,999,999
- ○ $5,000,000 - $7,999,999
- ○ $8,000,000+

23. Is there anything else you'd like to share with us?

Acknowledgements

Study and Training Task Force

Karmit Bulman, Executive Director, MAVA

Emilie Bromet-Bauer, AL!VE Board Vice President of Programs and Advocacy

Tobi Johnson, President, VolunteerPro

Polly Roach, MAVA Board, nonprofit consultant

Terry Straub, Program Coordinator, University of Minnesota Extension, Master Gardener Program – Hennepin County

Judie Russell, MAVA Board of Directors

Mary Quirk, Executive Director, Living at Home Network

Megan Vixie, AL!VE Board Vice President of Marketing

Garrett Zafke, Board Member, Conference Chair, MAVA

Data Compilation

Karmit Bulman, Executive Director, MAVA

Joan deMeurisse, MAVA Volunteer

Kota Minegishi, University of Minnesota, Assistant Professor, Dairy Analytics

Mary Quirk, Executive Director, Living at Home Network

Report Writing

Karmit Bulman, Executive Director, MAVA

Joan deMeurisse, MAVA Volunteer

Mary Quirk, Executive Director, Living at Home Network

Many thanks to Volunteer Match, Association for Leaders in Volunteer Engagement (AL!VE) and Energize Inc. for assistance with this research study.