

Volunteer Retention & Recognition

Even though many leaders believe that volunteers fill gaps and provide key services that otherwise would not be possible, keeping quality volunteers engaged relies on trained and motivated volunteer engagement professionals to support volunteers in their service journey.^{1,2}

Why do your volunteers stick with your organization (or not)?

Let's consider the evidence...



BE INTENTIONAL WITH VOLUNTEER TASKS

Identifying early when your organization will need volunteer support and recruiting people in advance helps ensure that volunteers feel needed and appreciated, and that their time is well-used. VCEI data shows that burnout is a risk among the most engaged Virginians, so be sure to strategically assign meaningful tasks with respect to each volunteer's capacity and interests.³



CELEBRATE THE VOLUNTEERS YOU HAVE

Most volunteers continue serving at an organization because they feel fulfilled through knowing they have contributed their skills and experience, are staying active, are doing more than donating, and have shared the experience with others.^{3,4} Recognition through volunteer awards and regularly sharing gratitude for their service can also help volunteers feel valued and appreciated.



MAKE IT A TEAM EFFORT

Engaging volunteers in meaningful service isn't a matter of re-inventing the wheel, it is about learning what matters to your volunteers, assigning them worthwhile tasks that provide opportunities for personal fulfillment, cultivating space for them, providing the support and sense of belonging they need, and recognizing their contributions accordingly. All staff who interact with volunteers at your organization play a critical role in these strategies, however, so retention must be a coordinated effort if it's to be successful.

It's worth the time and effort: your organization's staff time and resources are best leveraged when volunteers feel appreciated, trust your organization, and are activated to spread awareness of your organization within your network.⁵



ENGAGE DONORS AND FUNDERS IN VOLUNTEER RETENTION

Since less than 25% of funders view volunteer retention as a priority, it's clear that donors and funders need education about the importance of volunteer engagement professionals and strategies.^{1,2} Regional data and segment analysis of types of engagers from the VCEI can help support your case.^{3,6}

This is part of the Volunteer Engagement Toolbox, a series intended to empower people with strategies and insights to mobilize volunteers. It is informed by the Virginia Community Engagement Index (VCEI), which provides data-driven answers to critical questions about how volunteers engage in communities across the Commonwealth.

Explore findings at [ServeVirginia.org/why-serve](https://servevirginia.org/why-serve)

ABOUT SERVE VIRGINIA

Serve Virginia aspires to build a culture of service and volunteerism in all corners of the Commonwealth by inspiring individuals and organizations to engage, connecting them with the resources they need to make a difference, and celebrating the tremendous impacts we make together.



Explore regional insights by demographics to learn what motivates existing volunteers to continue volunteering in your area.

REFERENCES

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