

# 2025 VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERISM SUMMIT

May 14-15, 2025

The Virginia Volunteerism Summit is the Commonwealth’s leading event for organizations and individuals making a difference in their communities.

We hope you’re able to join us for the 2025 Virginia Volunteerism Summit, taking place virtually May 14-15 with follow-up in-person SERVE Convenings in June! With three keynote speakers and 25+ workshops over two days, we know you’ll have sessions that you’ll want to watch or re-watch after the Summit wraps up, so we’re thrilled to be able to offer streaming replay for all sessions through our virtual Airmeet platform for ticket holders. Serve Virginia staff will be available to provide Airmeet support, as needed. **Keep reading to explore the Schedule at a Glance as well as in-depth session descriptions...**

## Schedule at a Glance

	Wednesday, May 14	Thursday, May 15
9:00-10:15am ET	Opening Remarks & Keynote: Dr. Akilah Watkins	Day Two Welcome & Keynote: Manu Meel
10:15-10:30am ET	Break	Break
10:30-11:30am ET	Key Spaces Workshop Block	Voice Workshop Block
11:30-11:45am ET	Break	Break
11:45am-12:45pm ET	Equip Workshop Block	Experience Workshop Block
12:45-1:45pm ET	Brain Break	Closing Listening Session
1:45-3:15pm ET	<i>AmeriCorps Convening</i> Keynote: Chester W. Spellman & Corps Mini-Workshop Block	AmeriCorps Program Staff & Member Trainings (1:00-3:00pm ET)

# 2025 VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERISM SUMMIT May 14–15, 2025

## Empowering Service, Elevating Impact: The SERVE Framework in Action

The theme for the 2025 Summit celebrates and focuses on the SERVE Framework, which is informed by the Virginia Community Engagement Index (VCEI) and outlines five strategic focus areas (defined to the right) as well as three tactics that can be implemented to make progress towards the goal of building a stronger service, volunteerism, and civic engagement ecosystem to meet needs in Virginia.

These five focus areas can be paired with these tactics:

1. Communicate strategically.
2. Engage intentionally.
3. Invest resources.

By applying the SERVE Framework to help shape the workshops and keynotes featured in this year's Summit, we hope that you will meet others interested in this work and learn new strategies to strengthen volunteerism and service while addressing critical community needs.

## SERVE FRAMEWORK



### KEY SPACES

Meeting people where they are—  
at work, at school, and in faith communities



### EQUIP

Equipping nonprofits with what they  
need to serve their communities



### CORPS

Utilizing national service as a way to meet  
community needs



### VOICE

Empowering nonprofits to advocate  
for their cause



### EXPERIENCE

Ensuring that volunteers have a meaningful  
and impactful volunteer experience

Wednesday, May 14, 9:00–9:30am

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Wednesday, May 14, 9:35–10:15am

Opening Keynote: Dr. Akilah Watkins,  
President & CEO of Independent Sector

With over 25 years as a national thought leader, community organizer, and nonprofit executive, Dr. Watkins' expertise spans leadership development, nonprofit advocacy, and community development. To read Dr. Watkins' bio, [click here](#).



# 2025 VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERISM SUMMIT

## KEY SPACES WORKSHOP BLOCK

Wednesday, May 14, 10:30–11:30am

### **Building Bridges: Enhancing Service Connections between Faith Communities, Community Organizations & Public Resources, Stephen Wade, Va. Dept. of Social Services**

Hear from a panel of experts about how to navigate the landscape of public services available to families across the Commonwealth. Participants will gain valuable insights into how community partners and faith organizations can partner with Virginia agencies to address key issues, including substance use, child welfare, and more. This workshop aims to foster stronger connections between government, faith-based groups, and community programs, equipping attendees with knowledge and resources to support individuals and families.

### **How B Corp Certification Provides Structure and Accountability for Employee Volunteerism, Susie Fife, Red Orange Studio**

Discover how B Corp certification can serve as a powerful framework for structuring and enhancing employee volunteer programs. In this engaging workshop, we'll explore how the principles of B Corp certification foster accountability, purpose-driven initiatives, and measurable impact. Designed for professionals in corporate social responsibility, philanthropy, and volunteer management, this session will provide actionable insights on how to create meaningful and impactful volunteer experiences that align with company values and goals.

### **Where Do I Start? Resources for New Volunteer Managers, Marion Brunken, Volunteer Alexandria; Katie Campbell, Skye Consulting; Evelyn Riley, Dan River Nonprofit Network**

This panel discussion will familiarize entry-level volunteer managers and nonprofit staff, as well as other attendees, with volunteerism resources and support infrastructure in Virginia, from Volunteer Centers and capacity-building resources to Service Enterprise and more. Panelists represent diverse levels of experience and geographic distribution across the state, bringing their unique perspectives and knowledge to share.

### **Mobilizing the Workforce through Employee Volunteering, Brie Arduini, United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg; Amanda Simpson, Sentara; & Tyra Wilkins, Virginia Lottery**

Data from the Virginia Community Engagement Index shows that many Virginians want their employers to provide opportunities for them to volunteer, donate, and otherwise support community needs. It can be beneficial as well for nonprofits when volunteers are available during traditional work hours. Hear from the experiences of panelists involved on both sides of employee volunteering about how they form partnerships and leverage people power to support the good of the community.

### **Get to Know the 2025–2027 Virginia State Service Plan, Kathy J. Spangler, Serve Virginia**

Learn more about the Virginia State Service Plan for 2025–2027 and the strategic goals, key initiatives, and opportunities to drive community engagement across the state. This session will provide insights into the priorities set forth in the plan, including the emphasis on workforce development and addressing critical community needs. Whether you're a nonprofit leader, community organizer, or public servant, this workshop will equip you with knowledge and tools needed to contribute to a stronger, more resilient Virginia.

# 2025 VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERISM SUMMIT

## EQUIP WORKSHOP BLOCK

Wednesday, May 14, 11:45am–12:45pm

### **Finding Your Voice: Advocating for Yourself as a Volunteer Manager,**

*Carol Ayars, The Span Center*

If you sometimes struggle to explain your role, what your organization does, and the impact of your volunteers, this interactive workshop will help you find your voice. You'll get practical tips to confidently share your amazing work and your volunteers' contributions, within your organization and in the community, in just a few sentences that will make the listener want to know more. Design and practice your "elevator pitch" to effectively communicate your passion and impact. Who better to advocate for your cause than you?

### **Making Your Volunteer Opportunities Available for All Abilities,**

*Susan Sanow, Volunteer Fairfax & Donna Patchett*

Need new volunteers? What about including an untapped pool of potential volunteers—people with all abilities! In this educational program, you will learn how to define opportunities, welcome and support people with disabilities to make volunteering a meaningful and fulfilling experience. We will address responsibilities of host organizations, how to make reasonable accommodations, as well as how you can be a most effective host and supervisor. As leaders of volunteers, be the inclusive organization you aspire to be!

### **Navigating Change: Staying Mission-Minded During Periods of Transition,**

*Markita Madden & Kathe Goller, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention*

Change is inevitable. So, how do we keep organizational mission delivery front and center when it feels like chaos is happening behind the scenes? Organizational changes, staff changes, and volunteer changes can occur because of planned succession or unexpected events. This workshop will explore the ways in which change is not always bad, identifying ways to be flexible and view potential crises as opportunities for growth.

### **Preparing for Volunteer Success through Effective Onboarding,**

*Edward Hrinya, Total Action for Progress*

In this session, we will examine one critical aspect of effective volunteer mobilization: the onboarding process. Whether you're looking to improve your onboarding process or create one from scratch, this session will provide you with tools and strategies to answer the following questions: What information or training do volunteers need to be successful in my organization? What motivates my volunteers (and how do I capitalize on that)? What additional considerations are there for working with volunteers in rural communities?

### **Rally your Organization Around Service!,** *Nicole Smith & Amy Pinger, ALIVE*

Explore how a cross-functional team from your organization can leverage a research-based tool created by the RGK Center for Philanthropy and Community Service and delivered through ALIVE's Service Enterprise Initiative to assess your current community, volunteer, and AmeriCorps engagement practices, identify areas of opportunity, and prioritize improvements based on known drivers for organizational effectiveness.



# 2025 VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERISM SUMMIT

## EQUIP MINI-WORKSHOP BLOCK, CONTINUED

Wednesday, May 14, 11:45am–12:45pm

### Building an Engaged Board: Best Practices in Recruitment, Board Engagement, and Leveraging your Board Member's Talents, *Amy Nisenson, Nisenson Consulting*

This workshop will talk about board recruitment, engagement, and the 5 T's that every board member should be willing to do if they serve on a board: Time, Talent, Treasure, Ties, and Testimony. We will also discuss how to leverage these. Participants will walk away with sample tools they can use when recruiting, including a board matrix, board expectation sheet, and other resources. How to keep board members engaged once they are on board will also be covered.

## BRAIN BREAK

Wednesday, May 14, 12:45–1:45pm

Join us for mindfulness activities to help give your brain a break. From meditation to mandala making, explore these options for reflection, creative exploration, and rest before the afternoon AmeriCorps Convening.

Wednesday, May 14, 1:45–2:15pm

### AmeriCorps Convening Welcome

Wednesday, May 14, 1:45–2:15pm

### Keynote: Chester W. Spellman, Former Director of AmeriCorps State & National

Chester W. Spellman was appointed by the President to serve as the Director of AmeriCorps State and National at AmeriCorps in 2017. He also served as the CEO of Volunteer Florida, the Florida Commission on Community Service. To read Chester W. Spellman's full bio, [click here](#).



# 2025 VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERISM SUMMIT

## CORPS MINI-WORKSHOP BLOCK



Wednesday, May 14, 2:30–3:15pm

### **Rising Together: Supporting Youth Mental Health and Building Career Pathways with the Virginia Youth Mental Health Corps, *Analise Gammel, Serve Virginia***

The Virginia Youth Mental Health Corps, launching in September 2025, is a new, innovative solution to supporting the mental health of young people while also providing valuable career pathways in the mental health field. Join us to learn more about how YMHC members will serve youth in schools, through peer recovery organizations, and in community settings, the credentialing opportunities that will be available to members, and how to get involved or bring YMHC to your community.

### **From Idea to Action: How to Leverage AmeriCorps Planning Grants to Build Strong Programs, *Alex Vanik, Serve Virginia***

Have you ever considered how AmeriCorps could benefit your organization and your community? Are there big picture projects you've thought of, but don't know where to start? In this workshop, you'll hear from a panel of three organizations currently working on an AmeriCorps Planning Grant about their decision-making process from first learning about AmeriCorps to where they are now.

### **Making a Difference: How to Plan Your Best National Day of Service, *Elizabeth Richardson & Sarah Lawson, Serve Virginia***

Join us for an inspiring and practical session focused on planning your most impactful National Day of Service project yet! National Days of Service, such as Martin Luther King Jr. Day and 9/11 Day of Service, are opportunities to unite communities across the nation in service and volunteerism. In this session, we will walk you through the process of organizing a meaningful service project that not only addresses critical community needs but also recruits new volunteers and fosters long-term engagement. Additionally, learn more about the Virginia Service Foundation's National Day of Service Mini Grant Program, which provides funding opportunities to help you bring your vision to life. Learn how to apply, get tips on writing a strong application, and understand the support available to help you achieve your goals.

### **From Service to Story: Crafting Your AmeriCorps Narrative, *Mackenzie Vuotto & Samantha Lukasiewicz, Serve Virginia***

Every AmeriCorps member has a unique and impactful story to tell, one that highlights the transformative power of service. In this interactive session, you'll learn how to craft and share your AmeriCorps narrative in a compelling and meaningful way. Whether you're looking to reflect on your journey, inspire others, or use your story to advocate for service, this session will provide you with the tools and techniques to tell your story with confidence.



# 2025 VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERISM SUMMIT

## CORPS MINI-WORKSHOP BLOCK, CONTINUED

Wednesday, May 14, 2:30–3:15pm

**Advancing Virginia's Workforce Through AmeriCorps,**  
*Kathy J. Spangler, Serve Virginia*

AmeriCorps plays a pivotal role in strengthening communities, while also making an impact on the workforce across Virginia. This session will discuss the important role AmeriCorps plays as a workforce accelerator, and opportunities to join the Virginia Service Foundation in supporting policies developed to incentivize, support, and expand national service in the Commonwealth.

Thursday, May 15, 9:00–9:30am

**Welcome & Day Two Opening Remarks**

Thursday, May 15, 9:35–10:15am

**Keynote: Manu Meel, CEO of BridgeUSA**

Manu Meel is currently building the largest and fastest growing student movement to bridge our differences and change how we talk politics. He also hosts the weekly podcast, *The Hopeful Majority*. To read his full bio, [click here](#).



## VOICE WORKSHOP BLOCK

Thursday, May 15, 10:30–11:30am

**Empowering Nonprofits for Advocacy Without Losing 501(c)(3) Status,**  
*Michelle Ellis Young & Cierra Lewis, YWCA South Hampton Roads*

In today's politically-charged climate, nonprofits face the challenge of standing up for their communities and advocating for justice, while ensuring compliance with IRS regulations that protect their 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. This session will provide nonprofit leaders, organizers, staff, and volunteers with practical tools and strategies for advocating for their communities, navigating the complexities of advocacy in a way that does not jeopardize their nonprofit status, and building powerful coalitions to drive greater impact. Hear from experts who have successfully navigated this terrain, showcasing examples of how nonprofits can engage in powerful advocacy while maintaining compliance and integrity.



# 2025 VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERISM SUMMIT

## VOICE WORKSHOP BLOCK, CONTINUED

Thursday, May 15, 10:30–11:30am

### **Volunteers as Advocates: Our Organizational Change Journey,** *Heather Fortune, Carol Ayars, and Shana Beverly, The Span Center*

In April 2022, The Span Center began a two-year journey towards Service Enterprise Accreditation that would not only lead us through an organization change management but would change our perspective on how we leveraged the time and talent of volunteers to advance our agency's social mission. As part of this journey, our organization made changes that show the impact and importance of our volunteers. Our volunteers have been given a stronger voice to become their own advocates within The Span Center and into our community.

### **Engaging in Advocacy: Confronting Structures, Not Just Symptoms,** *Sheila Herlihy, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy*

People who want to get involved in volunteering are passionate about the issues and work that they do. Often, however, this work stays focused on immediate needs, like preventing hunger or animal welfare. Public policy has an impact on every single area of life, including the issues volunteers work on. Mobilizing volunteers as advocates can be a powerful way to create structural change for the benefit of your mission and community.

### **From Data to Action: Harnessing the Insights from the 2025 Virginia Community Engagement Index, Andy Bates, SIR**

Be among the first to hear key findings from the 2025 Virginia Community Engagement Index (VCEI)! This session will provide an in-depth look at how Virginians are engaging with their communities, the challenges they face, and the opportunities to strengthen volunteerism across the state. The VCEI offers critical insights into current trends in volunteerism, community participation, and civic engagement, highlighting areas of strength as well as areas in need of greater attention. In addition, we will discuss how these insights can inform strategies for increasing volunteer participation, enhancing impact, and fostering a more inclusive and diverse volunteer landscape, whether you're a nonprofit leader, volunteer manager, or advocate.

### **Participatory Budgeting in Virginia,** *Dr. Matthew Slaats, Leidiana Delgado, Miles Hopkins, Isaac Samuels,* *Richmond People's Budget*

In this workshop, we'll share about the work conducted by the members of the Richmond People's Budget, Virginia's first participatory budgeting process. We aim to use this example to spark a conversation with a general audience around participatory budgeting, a grassroots initiative aimed at empowering community members to propose and vote on ideas they want to see funded in their locality. The session will include an overview of the participatory budgeting process, how to create grassroots movements, the ethics of community communications and marketing tactics, and how your organization and community could integrate participatory budgeting into your work.



# 2025 VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERISM SUMMIT

## EXPERIENCE WORKSHOP BLOCK

Thursday, May 15, 11:45am–12:45pm

### **Beyond Bon-Bons and Bubble Baths: Addressing Risks for Burnout,**

*Jade Richardson Bock, Building Beloved Communities*

In this workshop, we'll address the causes of burnout and real, actionable self-care in the social-nonprofit sector, emphasizing the importance of creating a culture of appreciation and developing personal replenishment strategies. We'll look at the predictable nature of burnout in high-stress, resource-limited environments and provide practical tips for individuals and organizations to combat it. This presentation offers various strategies for daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly self-care practices, as well as suggestions for changing organizational culture to support employee and volunteer well-being.

### **Building Meaningful Volunteer Experiences for Enduring Impact,**

*Olivia Corcoran, Lindsey Payne & Dannon Thornton, GivePulse*

Whether you're a seasoned volunteer manager or new to the field, ensuring that volunteers have a meaningful and impactful experience is crucial for long-term success. In this session, we'll dive into designing volunteer programs that go beyond the basics, focusing on volunteer development and training. Learn strategies to engage volunteers, align opportunities with their interests and goals, and create experiences that foster a deep sense of connection, value, and motivation. Together, we'll focus on building impactful volunteer experiences that not only meet organizational goals but also align with the mission and vision of your organization, inspiring lasting commitment and growth.

### **Revitalizing Volunteer Outreach: Diversifying Strategies for Volunteer Recruitment, Retention, and Recognition,**

*Annabelle Bugey, Feed More*

In this presentation, we'll explore innovative strategies for recruiting and retaining volunteers to meet the changing values of volunteers, focusing on community building and purpose-driven work. Key topics include leveraging digital platforms and social media, as well as delving into the importance of geo-specific recruitment efforts. We'll discuss the value of building strong relationships through clear communication, feedback, and opportunities for recognition. Additionally, we'll highlight the significance of creating promotional material that will target your "ideal volunteer." By implementing these strategies, nonprofits can attract new volunteers and ensure they remain engaged and motivated.



# 2025 VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERISM SUMMIT

## EXPERIENCE WORKSHOP BLOCK, CONTINUED

Thursday, May 15, 11:45am–12:45pm

### Youth in Action: Building Leadership and Community Through Service, *Courtney Gonzalez, Volunteer Alexandria*

Empowering the next generation of volunteers requires innovative strategies that meet youth where they are and provide meaningful education on social issues. In this interactive session, we will explore best practices for recruiting youth volunteers by designing service projects that foster connectedness, leadership, and inclusivity. Using Volunteer Alexandria's successful youth engagement model as a foundation, we will discuss how educating youth about community needs, social justice, and civic responsibility can enhance their commitment to service. Participants will gain actionable insights into fostering youth leadership, building community impact, and ensuring that service experiences are both meaningful and lasting.

## CLOSING LISTENING SESSION

Thursday, May 15, 12:45–1:45pm

Join us for breakout room-style, moderated listening sessions, offering you the chance to share your perspectives, current challenges, lessons learned, and resources that you'd like to see developed.

## AMERICORPS PROGRAM STAFF & MEMBER TRAININGS

Thursday, May 15, 1:00–3:30pm, *Betsy Prueter, Do Good Be Good*

### 1:00pm—Training for AmeriCorps Members: How to Use Your Education Award

Paying off student loans, getting certified with a new skill, or studying in Spain... there are so many options for how to use your Education Award. Hear examples from AmeriCorps alumni who navigated MyAmeriCorps.gov successfully and used their award to further their goals. We'll also explain the most likely challenges you'll face and how to navigate them. Get ideas, tips on paperwork, and a plan for how to make the most of this benefit.

### 2:30pm—Trainings for AmeriCorps Program Staff

**Retention Starts at Recruitment:** How can your programs reach the fabled 100% retention? It starts now, with a well-planned and carefully executed recruitment strategy. Learn specific strategies for recruitment messages, interview questions, and screening criteria that will help your program recruit their best cohort yet.

**Surviving Exit Fever:** The final months of an AmeriCorps member's term can be a fruitful time for reflection and growth. However, with the excitement and anxiety of exiting service, members commonly make mistakes or leave things hanging. Prepare for this to make sure it is meaningful, productive, and a smooth transition.

# 2025 VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERISM SUMMIT

Presented by



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF  
SOCIAL SERVICES

With Thanks to Contributors



BRAIN INJURY  
SERVICES

*Empowering those impacted by brain injury*



Northern Virginia  
Family Service



community  
foundation

for a greater Richmond



Volunteer Alexandria  
HANDS ON NETWORK



Community Partners

