The 2017 New Hampshire Skilled Volunteer Report summarizes data from nearly 700 current and potential volunteer who have shared their motivations, needs, and interests in the nonprofit sector.

Funding for the survey was provided by the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. ESC collaborated with the NH Center for Nonprofits, Volunteer New Hampshire, Granite United Way, Monadnock United Way, and the United Way of the Greater Seacoast.
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Volunteers are the key to nonprofits successfully achieving their stated missions and the purpose of this survey was to explore the dynamics surrounding skilled volunteers. It is interesting to note that in the United States, approximately 10,000 people per day are retiring, thereby creating a large opportunity for nonprofit organizations (NPOs) to attract new volunteers. Many of these individuals have professional skills that are highly valuable to NPOs. For the purposes of this survey, skilled volunteers are defined as people who have specific work-related experience, professional skill sets, educational backgrounds, or other abilities developed through practical experience.

The objectives of conducting the survey were to understand the following:

- What is their availability and motivation?
- How can organizations best recruit these individuals to help with their missions?

What we discovered through the responses to the survey is that skilled volunteers are eager to help those organizations that have missions in alignment with the respondent’s priorities. Volunteers are generally highly satisfied with their volunteer activities and many are willing to expand their involvement to other organizations. In addition, there is a pool of potential in-career volunteers who are also willing to help. With effective outreach to both groups, NPOs who follow the recommendations of this report should be successful in recruiting volunteers to help with their missions.

The NH Skilled Volunteer Survey was conducted as a collaborative effort between Executive Service Corps and the NH Center for Nonprofits. It offered current and potential volunteers the opportunity to share their motivations, needs, and interests with the nonprofit sector. Funding for this survey was provided by the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. ESC also thanks our partners Volunteer NH, Granite United Way, Monadnock United Way, and the United Way of the Greater Seacoast for helping to distribute the survey.

In addition to this Executive Summary, this report contains the following sections:

- Methodology
- Goals
- Key Findings
- Recommendations
- Detailed Survey Results
2. METHODOLOGY

ESC created an online survey in Survey Monkey to address the goals set out for this project. During the period September through November 2016, ESC and the New Hampshire Center for Nonprofits (NHCN) conducted a survey of skilled volunteers in New Hampshire. The survey was distributed to people on several mailing lists and social media postings, and we received completed surveys from 668 individuals.

Survey Goals

From survey data and additional research, we wanted to learn the following:

- How many current and potential skilled volunteers reside in New Hampshire?
- What are skilled volunteer needs, likes, and dislikes? What motivates them?
- Who are the best candidates to recruit as skilled volunteers? What are the best practices to recruit them?
- How can charitable donors to nonprofit organizations be approached for skilled volunteer recruitment?
- Do NPOs adequately describe their mission and the roles they want skilled volunteers to fill?

3. KEY FINDINGS

Skilled Volunteers – Size of Population

The skilled volunteer pool in New Hampshire is estimated to be approximately 70,000 people based on the Corporation for National and Community Service statistics (329,600 total volunteers in NH and 22% engage in professional or management activities\(^1\)). It is unknown the exact number of skilled volunteers currently engaged with nonprofit organizations but our survey revealed that 21% of the skilled volunteers in New Hampshire who responded to our survey are NOT currently involved in helping NPOs. These statistics suggest that there is a significant opportunity to recruit skilled volunteers to assist NPOs within the state.

Skilled Volunteers – Desired Project Scope

Our survey suggests NPO projects that involve less than 10 hours a month are popular with skilled volunteers. The majority of skilled volunteers indicated they

\(^{1}\) Corporation for National and Community Service, https://www.nationalservice.gov/vcla
are not constrained by a project's length and are willing to consider those with durations longer than one year provided that their monthly commitment is less than 10 hours.

This survey assessed the number of hours respondents are currently spending in their volunteer activities as well as additional hours these volunteers would be willing to devote to a new NPO. Approximately 50% of people who answered this question are spending 0-10 hours per month in their current volunteer activity.

However, it was surprising to see that almost 10% of the respondents were donating more than 40 hours per month helping NPOs. A U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report ("Volunteering in the United States, 2015") states that the percentage of people who volunteer 500 hours annually (~40 hours per month) was 6%. Thus, NH has almost twice as many volunteers donating over 40 hours per month as the national average.

Survey Respondent Demographics

Age. Respondents were likely to be 45 years or older (74%). Their age distribution was as follows:

- 25 to 34 years (9%)
- 35 to 44 years (11%)
- 45 to 54 years (23%)
- 55 to 64 years (30%)
- 65 to 74 years (21%)

Gender. The majority (72%) of respondents were female.

Education. Most respondents (84%) have earned a college degree with 41% having a graduate degree, 37% a bachelor degree, and 6% an associate degree. The maximum education level attained by 12% was some college and 4% attained a high school degree.

Work Status. The majority of respondents were either working full-time (63%) or retired (22%).

**Household Income.** Respondents with a household income of $75,000 to $150,000 were 41% with the next largest income cohort being $30,000 to $75,000 at 34%.

**Residence.** 92% of respondents reside in NH with the largest cohorts residing in:

- Cheshire County (21%)
- Hillsborough County (20%)
- Merrimack County (17%)
- Rockingham County (15%)

**Current vs. Potential Volunteers.** When we compared current and potential volunteers, there were demographic differences. For example, there were more current volunteers in the 65 to 74 age group: 24% (current) vs. 9% (potential), while there were more potential volunteers in the 25 to 34 age group: 6% (current) vs. 19% (potential). There were more females among current volunteers. Potential volunteers tended to be slightly less educated than current volunteers, were more likely to be employed and less likely to be retired, and tended to have a lower household income than current volunteers.

**Nonprofit Organization Mission.** The survey asked respondents to identify the mission area of the organization(s) for which they are currently volunteering. Nearly 50% of the organizations were identified as either human services or community improvement related (25% and 23% respectively). The next largest categories were arts & culture (19%) and education (10%).

It is interesting to note that when respondents were asked what were the most important attributes of an NPO that would entice them to volunteer (Q16), the overwhelming answers related to having a mission in alignment with the respondent’s priorities. Many of the narrative answers expressed the desire of respondents to volunteer for NPOs whose mission relates to addressing social needs. This is further illustrated in the responses to Q19 that show the greatest interest in volunteering for NPOs related to community improvement, education, human services, and healthcare/mental health (nearly 63%). Respondents identified other areas of interest across a broad spectrum of mission areas so NPOs unrelated to social needs should not assume that they can’t attract volunteers, although the available pool of candidates may be smaller.

Respondents also stated a desire for NPOs to have clear missions, goals, and a demonstrated track record (measurable results). Some of the narrative answers illustrating this point mentioned “compelling mission and clear focus” and “show their effectiveness in accomplishing their mission.” While mission was paramount in
attracting new volunteers, it is equally important to ensure that the NPO is operating effectively in delivering results tied to the stated mission.

**Volunteer Motivation**

Volunteers are motivated by the organization’s mission, quality of their work, and feeling that the organization needs their specific skills. As seen in Q7, the majority of respondents (70%) feel that personal alignment with the NPOs mission was crucial in their motivation to volunteer their time. In addition, almost half of the respondents volunteer for organizations that do quality work, 31% were motivated by a dedicated staff, and 46% felt that the organization needed their particular skills (clearly outlined volunteer assignments and job descriptions that are aligned with their skills).

The most important things NPOs can do to stimulate interest fall into three main types of activities:

- Create activities related to volunteer engagement and communication, including setting clear expectations and culture
- Communicate an important mission that aligns with volunteers’ own values
- Create activities related to optimizing the organizations’ outcomes and effectiveness

**Volunteer Skills**

From Q9, a significant number of our skilled volunteers are currently serving in key leadership positions, either on boards (74%) or committees (69%). Other positions frequently cited were fundraising (47%) and marketing (22%).

When asked in Q15 which professional skills volunteers would most like to apply, the responses differed slightly as follows:

- Business or strategic planning (56%)
- Fundraising (46%)
- Marketing (39%)
- Human resources (29%)
- Finance (25%)
- Bookkeeping/general office (21%)
- IT/computer support (10%)

This finding highlights the need for regular assessments of volunteer personnel to determine if they are serving in appropriate and fulfilling roles. It can also be
instructive for NPOs in creating job assignments tailored to these specific areas of interest.

**Rewards**

Most respondents felt their skills and talents are being utilized in the organizations where they volunteer most often and that the work they do is extremely satisfying. In fact, 96% of respondents reported being either satisfied or extremely satisfied with their current work. In addition to being very satisfied, respondents overwhelmingly felt that their skills and talents are being utilized by the NPO. This suggests that organizations are doing a good job of defining volunteer assignments and matching the skills of volunteers with these jobs.

Reasons for respondents' satisfaction rating included:

- Deriving pleasure from the work
- Feeling they were making a difference (relating to the organization’s mission)
- Being valued by the organization
- Seeing results from their efforts

These results track very closely with findings in a University of New Hampshire report titled “Volunteer Motivation, Recognition and Retention.” Their conclusion was that NPOs should provide an environment of positive motivation and appropriate, ongoing recognition of their volunteers. Achieving this sort of environment is key to being successful in recruiting and retaining qualified, dedicated, and skilled volunteers.

**Recruiting Skilled Volunteers**

A significant majority of current and potential skilled volunteers are willing to volunteer in other organizations. The key is how to reach these individuals (current or potential volunteers) in order to expand volunteer engagement with NPOs.

The current state is that more than half of the respondents reported that they volunteer most often at organizations when they were contacted directly either by a friend or colleague (39%) or by the organization (26%). This indicates that networking continues to be the strongest method for volunteer recruitment.

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3“Volunteer Motivation, Recognition and Retention,”
When asked how they would like to learn about future volunteer opportunities, the majority preferred email or social media (51%). Potential volunteers are more driven to action by social media and internet-based research than current volunteers, while both groups respond well to recruitment by friends or colleagues.

Respondents indicated they might be willing to volunteer at a new or different NPO if issues related to time constraints and flexibility could be addressed. The key to tapping into this potential is to:

- Create volunteer opportunities that have a scope of work less than 10 hours per month
- Have a crisp mission statement for your organization with which volunteers can identify
- Create clear volunteer job descriptions that identify the required skills (e.g. marketing, finance, development/fundraising, etc.)
- Satisfy volunteer needs by creating a positive environment and providing ongoing recognition of their contributions

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a large, untapped pool of potential skilled volunteers in New Hampshire that NPOs can recruit when utilizing the right approach. Organizations should start by ensuring that they have a clear, concise mission statement to attract potential volunteers and use this statement in all recruiting materials and messages. It was clear from the survey that the most important indicator for skilled volunteers to work with an organization is the clarity of the mission and that the mission is in sync with the values of the individual.

Once the mission statement is complete, the next step is the use of effective outreach to recruit these potential volunteers. We learned from the survey that the most effective method for reaching potential volunteers is email or social media. The current cohort of potential skilled volunteers is younger than existing volunteers and prefers to be contacted through electronic media.

The other essential component to recruiting strategies is networking. We learned that 42% of all respondents heard about their current volunteering opportunity from a friend or colleague. Organizations should leverage the networks of their existing volunteers and donors to launch a successful recruiting program.

Another crucial component to attracting skilled volunteers is having clearly outlined job descriptions. We learned through the responses to several questions that people want to have clearly defined assignments that will contribute to the NPOs success in delivering their stated mission. We also learned that people have a
preference for assignments that involve less than 10 hours per month so it’s important to factor in this preference when designing job descriptions.

Respondents generally found the work with NPOs extremely satisfying (55%) and listed a variety of reasons why. The common themes surrounding satisfaction were deriving pleasure from the work and belief that they were contributing to the success of a mission they personally believed in. Knowing this, NPOs should highlight these volunteer satisfaction factors in their marketing messages as they recruit volunteers. Recruiting messages should include:

- Enjoy the work and enhance your skills
- Enjoy making a difference
- Believe in the mission of the organization

Organizations that can, should create volunteer positions that take advantage of the advanced skills of these volunteers, recruit for these skills and use these skills in marketing messaging. The key areas which potential skilled volunteers identified as being desired assignments include:

- Business or strategic planning
- Fundraising
- Marketing
- Human Resources
- Finance
5. APPENDIX - DETAILED SURVEY RESULTS

Q1. Do you currently volunteer for one or more NPOs?

Of the 668 people who responded to the survey, approximately 21% are not currently engaged in volunteering. This represents an additional capacity of skilled volunteers that could be recruited to help NPOs.

Respondents who said they do NOT currently volunteer are considered “potential volunteers.” When they responded no to Q1, they jumped to Q17 in the survey. Q2 – Q16 were not presented to 21% of the 668 respondents.

Q1: Do you currently volunteer for one or more nonprofit organizations?

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Q2. Please list the NPOs where you are currently volunteering.

NPOs being assisted by survey participants show a high degree of diversity. Respondents identified 705 NPOs for which they are currently volunteering and almost 2/3 of these were mentioned only once. Of the remainder, the top 5 organizations identified are United Ways, churches, libraries, food assistance NPOs, and hospices.

It is interesting to note that a significant percentage of those who responded volunteer at two or more NPOS simultaneously.
**Q3. For which organization do you volunteer most often?**

The responses to this question also show a high degree of diversity. Almost 62% of the responses named an NPO only once, with United Ways, churches, and libraries showing high frequency.
Q4. In a typical month, across all the organizations for which you volunteer, about how many hours do you volunteer?

This question was answered by 387 people (58% of the total). Approximately 50% of these respondents are spending 0-10 hours volunteering while almost 24% spend 11-20 hours per month. It is interesting to note that almost 10% are spending >40 hours per month which is above the national average and indicates that there are a fairly sizeable number of volunteers who are devoting considerable time to NPOs.
Q5. What is the maximum project length for which you would consider volunteering?

The majority of respondents (65%) indicated they would consider volunteering for projects over 12 months in duration.
Q6. Which of the following best describes the mission of the organization for which you volunteer most often?

Approximately half of the respondents described the mission of the organization where they volunteered most often as human services (25%) or community improvement (23%). Those following included arts and culture (19%); education (16%); health care/mental health (9%); environment (4%); and religion (3%).
Q7. Which of the following factors were most important in your decision to volunteer at the place you volunteer most often (check up to 3)?

By far, the most important factor of the majority of respondents was feeling great empathy toward the organization’s mission (70% response). The remaining most frequently stated factors were as follows:

- Feeling that the organization needed one’s skills (46%)
- Appreciating the quality of the organization’s work (45%)
- Being impressed by NPO staff and other volunteers (31%)
- Simply being asked (28%)
- Manageable time requirement (22%)
- Opportunity to learn new skills (15%)

Among “other” reasons, personal reasons and prior experience with the organization (either as volunteer or beneficiary) were cited most often.
Q8. How did you first learn about the volunteering activity at the organization where you volunteer most often?

More than half of the respondents reported that they volunteer most often at organizations when they were contacted directly either by a friend or colleague (39%) or by the organization (26%). Another 10% learned about the organization through electronic sources such as email, social media or other websites including Volunteer NH or United Way.
Q9. What is the nature of the work that you do where you volunteer most often? Check all that apply.

The majority of respondents either serve on a board (74%) or on a committee (69%) followed by fundraising (47%), marketing (22%), and finance (21%).
Q10. How satisfying is the work with the organization where you volunteer most often?

The vast majority of respondents are either extremely satisfied (55%) or satisfied (41%) with the work they do with the NPO they volunteer most often.
Q11. Please tell us why you gave the above satisfaction rating.

The most frequent responses were:
- Enjoyed or received pleasure from their work (29%)
- Making a difference (21%)
- Believed in or related to the NPO mission (19%)
- Feeling they were accomplishing or seeing results (11%)
- Feeling needed or appreciated (8%)
- Other (14%)
Q12. Do you feel your skills and talents are being properly utilized at the organization where you volunteer most often?

The vast majority of respondents (96%) feel their skills and talents are being utilized in the organization(s) where they volunteer most often.

| Yes | 92% |
| No  | 8%  |

Q13. Would you be willing to consider volunteering at a new or different NPO in the future?

83% responded that they would be willing to volunteer at a new or different organization, suggesting there is a rich supply of high impact volunteers to be accessed with effective recruiting efforts.

| Yes  | 83% |
| No   | 17% |
Q14. If you answered “no” in the preceding question, please tell us why.

Of the 95 respondents who answered “no” to Q13, 46% stated that time constraints were a factor in a decision to not volunteer. The secondary reason cited (29%) was having a strong commitment to or satisfaction with one’s current NPO which precluded them from volunteering elsewhere.
Q15. What professional skills would you most like to apply when working with a NPO? Check all that apply.

The professional skills cited most frequently are business or strategic planning (56%), fundraising (45%), marketing (39%), human resources (29%), and finance (25%). All of these skills are beneficial to any organization whether it’s for-profit or nonprofit. This represents a tremendous resource for nonprofits to tap into through effective volunteer recruiting.
Q16. What is the most important thing a new/different nonprofit organization could do to stimulate your interest in working with them?

According to our respondents, the most important factors driving volunteers interest in working for a NPO have to do primarily with the organization itself. By far the most important factor is that the organization’s mission resonates with the volunteer’s values and priorities (nearly 50%). Respondents also want to affiliate with a strong, well run organization for which they believe the organization is effective in delivering its mission (21%).
**Q17.** If you found the right match, do you think you would be interested in using your skills to help a nonprofit organization in your community?

Among potential volunteers, almost 98% replied they either are or might be interested in helping a NPO. This represents an interested, willing and fertile source of volunteers for which to target recruiting efforts.
NOTE: Questions 18-22 were asked of potential volunteers only.

**Q18. If yes or maybe, for how much time would you be interested in volunteering?**

The majority of respondents (50%) reported that they would be interested in volunteering a maximum of 15 hours per month with 45% saying they would prefer less than 5 hours per month.

It is important to keep in mind that the answers to this question reflect the additional number of hours current volunteers would be willing to spend. The results of Q4 (how many hours currently spent volunteering) show a good commitment from respondents to their present volunteering. Approximately 74% of respondents are currently spending 0-20 hours per month while 11% are spending 21-30 hours per month. The answers to Q18 show additional capacity for current volunteers and should not be construed to indicate the hours new volunteers might be willing to contribute.
Q19. Please choose the types of organizations for which you may be interested in volunteering.

Among potential volunteers, respondents rated their interest in types of organizations they would be interested in volunteering as follows:

- Community improvement (62%)
- Education (54%)
- Human services (552%)
- Environment (47%)
- Arts and culture (38%)
- Health care and mental health (36%)
- Religion (11%)
Q20. What professional skills do you have that you would like to contribute in a volunteer capacity? (Choose up to 3.)

Bookkeeping/general office work was listed most often (47%) as the professional skill potential volunteers would like to contribute, followed by other functional skills including:

- Fundraising (39%)
- Business or strategic planning (37%)
- Marketing (30%)
- Human resources (29%)
- Finance (21%)
- IT/computer support (13%)
Q21. In what areas are you interested in volunteering? (Choose up to 3.)

This question addresses which specific areas within an NPO that volunteers are most interested and willing to volunteer their time and skills. The respondents indicated that they are most interested in serving on committees (78%). Other areas of interest with fewer responses include:

- Serving on a board (42%)
- General office support (38%)
- Fundraising (26%)
- Marketing (23%)
- Finance (13%)
- IT/computer support (7%)
Q22. How would you like to learn about volunteer opportunities? (Choose up to 3.)

For potential volunteers, learning about volunteer opportunities through email or social media was the choice of 51%, followed by being recruited by a friend or colleague (42%), and research on Volunteer NH website (34%) or a United Way website (19%). Potential volunteers are driven more by social media and internet research than current volunteers.
Q23: What is your age?

- 18 to 24: 3%
- 25 to 34: 9%
- 35 to 44: 11%
- 45 to 54: 23%
- 55 to 64: 30%
- 65 to 74: 21%
- 75 or older: 4%

Q24: What is your gender?

- Female: 72%
- Male: 27%
- Other or prefer not to specify: 1%

Q25: What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Graduate degree: 41%
- Bachelor degree: 37%
- Associate degree: 6%
- Some college but no degree: 12%
- High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED): 4%
- Less than high school degree: 0%
Q26: Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

- Disabled, not able to work: 0%
- Retired: 22%
- Not employed, NOT looking for work: 2%
- Not employed, looking for work: 1%
- Employed, working part-time: 11%
- Employed, working full-time: 63%

Q27: What is your approximate average household income?

- More than $250,000: 4%
- $150,001-$250,000: 15%
- $30,001 to $75,000: 34%
- $75,001 to $150,000: 41%
- Less than $30,000: 7%
Q28: In what county do you live?

- Belknap County: 3%
- Carroll County: 3%
- Cheshire County: 21%
- Coos County: 1%
- Grafton County: 4%
- Hillsborough County: 20%
- Merrimack County: 17%
- Rockingham County: 15%
- Strafford County: 8%
- Sullivan County: 2%
- Sullivan County (Maine, Vermont or Massachusetts): 8%

Q29: Would you like to be contacted by nonprofit organizations about volunteer opportunities? If yes, please give us your contact information below.

- Yes: 24%
- No: 76%