

Arizona Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism



Arizona's Volunteer Administrators and Advocates: Perspectives, Practices, and Potential

Volunteer administrators play a key role in Arizona's communities. As conductors who orchestrate the efforts of well over 1 million Arizonans, volunteer administrators have an impact in our schools, our businesses, our neighborhoods, and our government.

In the fall of 2014, The Arizona Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism and the ASU Lodestar Center for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Innovation collaborated to survey 185 volunteer administrators and advocates, defined as those whose primary role is coordinating and directing volunteers and/or promoting volunteerism (see page 4 for details). This research builds on a previous collaborative report, "Arizona Volunteerism Today and in the Future," which identified volunteer administrators and advocates as key players in any efforts improve our state's ability to serve people and solve problems. This research aims to discover how communities, organizations and government can best support Arizona's volunteer administrators.



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

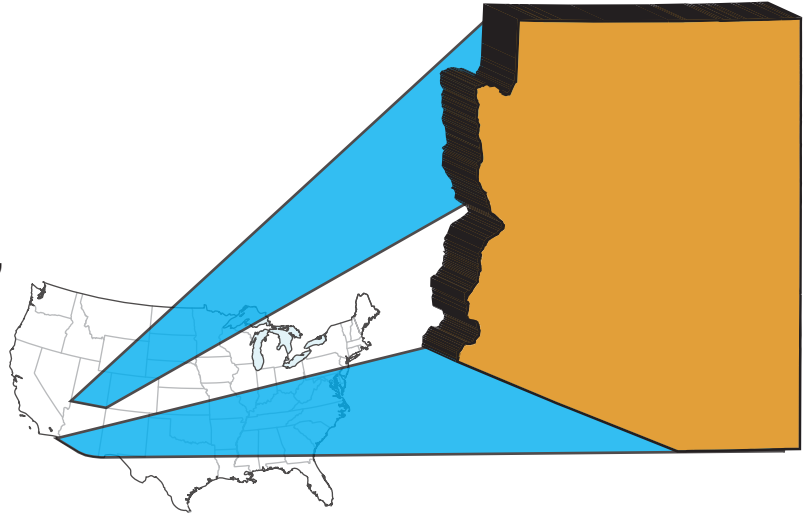


Key Findings

1

Locally based trainings and resources are preferred

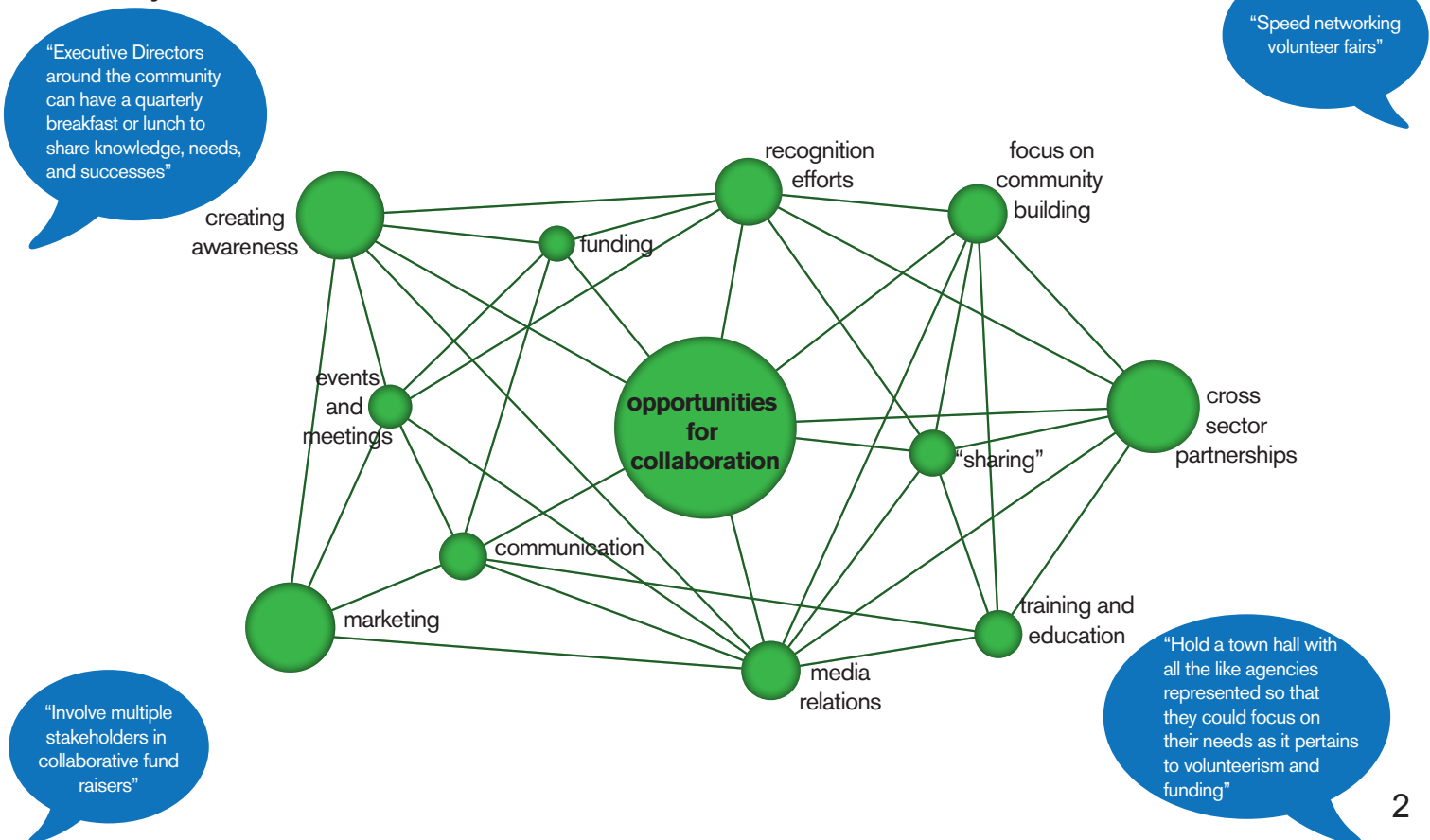
Programs, trainings, and resources with a strong local presence are preferred over national organizations without a significant local component. All of the organizations that respondents are most familiar with and find helpful have a local office. They include (but are not limited to) the United Way, The Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism, the ASU Lodestar Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Innovation, Hands On Greater Phoenix, the Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits, and the Arizona Community Foundation.



2

Collaboration is crucial

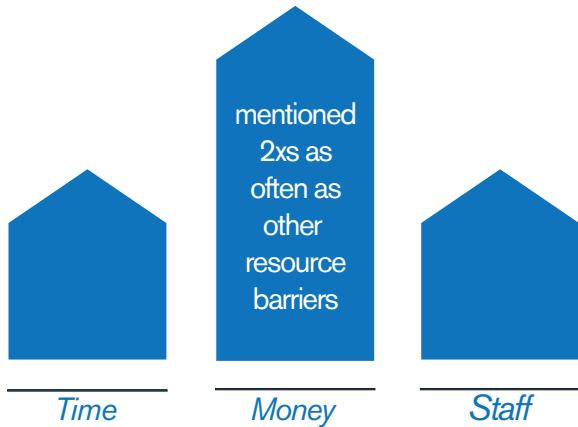
Virtually all volunteer administrators recognize the value of collaboration and sharing, and many survey respondents listed promising ideas for leveraging strengths and resources for the community's benefit.



3

To achieve volunteer program goals, more organizational capacity and internal support are needed.

When asked “what barriers prevent you or your organization from accomplishing your volunteer program goals?” over half of the respondents cite a lack of a variety resources. Sometimes this is explained as an organizational capacity issue, i.e., the kinds of typical resource constraints faced by many organizations in today’s economy. Many volunteer programs are stalled by often overlooked internal barriers that can include not being well integrated into the organization’s mission, strategic plan, business plan, and/or financial structure. Some respondents also note a lack of genuine commitment on the part of organization leadership.



—“Our program is not recognized as a real program.”

—“The volunteer program needs real funding and a full-time coordinator.”

4

Community awareness is improving, but more is needed.

Successful volunteer programs are deeply rooted in communities and require broad-based involvement and awareness. Forty-five percent of volunteer administrators think community awareness and involvement in volunteerism is growing stronger. However, “community support” topped the list of areas that need improvement. This underscores the importance of local, community-based efforts to support and promote volunteerism.



“Showing the community a more clear picture of what’s being done now and how it can be improved will give volunteers a better sense of accomplishment, making them more willing to commit to completing a project.”

5

The education and training of volunteer administrators: variety and diversity



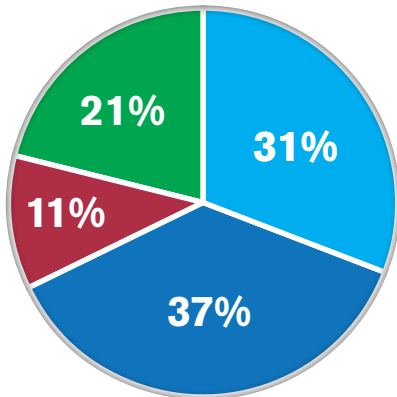
Volunteer administrators come from diverse educational backgrounds and have received a wide variety of formal trainings and certifications. There is no standard certification or training that most volunteer administrators have completed; more than 20 different formal training and certificate programs were reported.

Over 70% of volunteer administrators rate themselves as competent in the areas of communicating with, training, recognizing, and retaining volunteers. Measuring volunteer program impact was the area in which most volunteer administrators indicated they had less competence and needed more training.



VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATOR/ADVOCATE ROLES

This report focuses on Volunteer Administrators and Advocates, defined as individuals currently serving in one of the following roles:



- **VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR:** works frequently and directly with volunteers and does not supervise other paid professional staff. Has some (or full) responsibility for the administration and record-keeping of the volunteer program.
- **VOLUNTEER MANAGER OR DIRECTOR:** manages an organization's volunteer program through the supervision of paid staff. Works to acquire and manage program resources and is responsible for record-keeping and reports.
- **VOLUNTEER ADVOCATE:** advocates and promotes volunteerism at the community-wide level, secures resources to advance volunteerism, and/or works for an organization that builds volunteerism capacity (the organization may or may not directly provide volunteer experience).
- **UNPAID VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATOR OR ADVOCATE:** fulfills the role of a coordinator, manager, or advocate without pay.

This report was researched and authored by Stephanie La Loggia, M.A., and Devin Oakes. Findings are based on responses to an online survey to volunteer administrators and advocates; 185 useable responses were received. For further information on this research, or to read the full report, please visit: <https://lodestar.asu.edu/research>.

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