2023

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT

Back to Business Edition

JANUARY 20, 2023
#vmprogress2023

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2023: Back to Business Edition

As we rebound from the immense impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on volunteer-driven organizations, we have cause to be optimistic. Overall volunteer numbers are up, as well as volunteer hours. And nonprofits understand, now more than ever, the need for active volunteers to meet their missions.

However, this year's report also points to persistent challenges that continue to plague the sector – the lack of diversity in volunteer management staff, the lack of sufficient time to do all that is needed in the complex role of volunteer manager, and the inability to consistently attract the volume of volunteer talent needed to fuel vital organizational goals to name only a few.

In this, our Back to Business Edition, we explore how volunteer capacity is doing in a "post-pandemic" world. We also hope to further the conversation about volunteer engagement impact metrics. In our survey, we asked about four key outcomes metrics – whether organizations were tracking them and what their results were.

This is in no way a substitute for a full evaluation; however, our preliminary findings were sobering. A substantial number organizations are not tracking even the most basic of performance indicators. Along these lines, many volunteer managers are not aware of the budgets used to resource the results they hope to achieve.

Without this essential information, managers are flying blind. It's difficult to imagine a world where volunteer organizations can make informed improvements, smart investments, and calculated bets on how they can attain the results they seek.

While volunteers aren't paid a wage for their contributions, managing this special talent pool does come at a cost, and one that struggling nonprofits cannot afford to squander. It's time we took a close look at how devaluing volunteers (a common complaint shared in the survey) negatively impacts an organization's bottom line.

We hope this report adds to the conversation,

Tobi Johnson, MA, CVA
Founder, Tobi Johnson & Associates | VolunteerPro

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January 2023

About the Research

The survey questionnaire was developed with input by the primary researcher with input from former practitioners. It included 41 closed and open-ended questions; most questions were optional. It was administered online only using the Zoho Surveys platform.

A link to the questionnaire was distributed through a broad range of volunteer networks. Responses were collected from October 20 – November 22, 2022. A total of 1,598 volunteer administrators (paid & volunteer) from 36 countries responded; 60 were disqualified because they had not worked directly with volunteers in the past 12 months, and 1,247 (77%) completed the full questionnaire.

Limitations of the Data
For its eighth year, the survey was available globally and promoted widely to previous respondents as well as through distribution partners. The data does not include the experiences and perceptions of those who had stopped working in the field for at least one year.

This year, respondents were asked to share their current volunteer capacities and rate their perceived levels of burnout, and their agency's current staffing and compensation levels. While these data are self-reported and do not represent an objective and independent assessment, they nonetheless offer subjective insights, trends, and perspectives.

A Note About Weighted Averages
Most of questions in the survey are multiple choice and ask respondents to select from a specific band of numbers (e.g., 26-50%). Each of these bands is assigned a weighted value.

The statistical means (or averages) we note throughout the report reflect a weighted average, which is the average of a set of responses, each with different associated "weights" or values. The weighted average offers a more accurate look at a set of data than the normal average alone.

A Note on Terminology
While no globally-accepted standards for job titles or terminology currently exist in the voluntary sector, we are doing our part to understand some of the current alignments and uses at work in our field.

In lieu of standards, we use the job titles of volunteer coordinator, manager, director, administrator, and leader of volunteers interchangeably throughout this report. No offense is intended nor should be taken.

Project Champions

Many Thanks to Our Distribution Partners & Reviewers!

The following organizations supported the survey by promoting it to their networks. Thank you for helping us raise awareness about this work.

- AL!VE (Association of Leaders in Volunteer Engagement)
- America's Service Commissions
- Arbor Hospice
- Better Impact Inc.
- Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration
- Forum for Volunteer Administrators
- DOVIA Greater Akron
- Georgia CASA
- Hospice of Michigan
- Jason Frenzel, CVA
- Lehigh Valley Health Network
- Make-A-Wish America
- Minnesota Alliance for Volunteer Advancement
- Gina Hansen
- Leukemia Foundation Australia
- Jo Gibney
- Pittsburgh Cultural Trust
- Rob Jackson Consulting Ltd
- Sanctuary Hospice
- Skye Consulting
- spinktank
- Sue Carter Kahl Consulting
- The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay
- U.S. Naval Undersea Museum
- Volunteer Ireland
- VolunteerMatch
- VQ Volunteer Strategies

What We Hoped to Learn

Inside You'll Find ...

- The demographics and diversity of volunteer managers (see **page 8-13**)

- The median salaries for leaders of volunteers and how they compare to pre-pandemic levels (see **page 36**)

- The staffing levels for volunteer services teams and supervisor-to-volunteer ratios (see **page 10, 24-25**)

- How the pandemic impacted volunteer participation levels and where are they now (see **page 21, 23**)

- What outcome and impact tracking mechanisms are currently in use by volunteer-involving organizations, and their results (see **page 40-51**)

What Inspired Us

- **Volunteer Capacity Has Rebounded After Two Years of Major Decline** – Both number of active volunteers and average monthly hours per volunteer are back to pre-pandemic levels. However, volunteer recruitment was also the top challenge and top priority for respondents.

- **While the Challenges are Significant, the Mood is Positive** – Survey respondents noted numerous obstacles to effective volunteer engagement – both internal and external. However, sentiment analysis of their open-ended comments shows that they remain resilient and positive about their work.

Why conduct a survey like this?
We all need to become better, more informed advocates.

① **Volunteer resource managers** can benefit from seeing how their colleagues rate their own priorities, challenges, and opportunities.

② **Volunteer-led organizations** need clear benchmarks to help them make meaningful comparisons and informed decisions about their volunteer strategy.

③ **Nonprofit consultants, trainers, and capacity builders** need to know the greatest needs for our field.

④ **Our sector** needs to understand recent capacity challenges & issues in order to better advocate for our needs.

General Impressions

- The characteristics of respondents have been consistent over eight years, and the participation from countries around the world continues to expand.

  Volunteer managers are significantly less diverse than nonprofit staff and the general workforce. This has not changed in eight years and is not improving.

- Volunteer managers continue to wear many hats and may continue to be responsible for additional tasks assigned to them during the pandemic. Lack of time to complete all tasks was a top priority this year, second only to volunteer recruitment.

  Only one in five devote 100% of their time to volunteer management in an average week. This makes it challenging for organizations to gain traction on their volunteer initiatives – a greater percentage of time devoted to volunteers appeared to correlate with higher volunteer capacity, progress to goals, and reduced volunteer churn.

- Most organizations collect volunteer feedback via surveys, and the collection of feedback form volunteers correlated with higher perceptions of program performance.

  Organizations are most likely to gather input from volunteers on an annual basis with few gathering input at key touchpoints in the volunteer journey. Since volunteer retention is a high priority for many respondents, gathering feedback earlier might help stem the tide of turnover or lack of consistent engagement.

- Both employee and volunteer burnout are emerging challenges that were not mentioned by respondents in previous years of the survey.

  In last year's survey, we explored burnout in volunteer managers and found that most were not at risk of burnout. This year, we noticed an emerging trend of burnout in coworkers and volunteers being noted as a key challenge to effective volunteer engagement.

- The survey data appear to indicate that, while there are new volunteer managers entering the field, turnover of existing volunteer managers is not the norm.

  The vast majority remained with their employers through the pandemic, an even higher percentage of those with greater than a decade experience.

WHO WE SURVEYED

Geographic Representation

Where Were Respondents Located?

The survey's reach has been expanding globally with 36 countries participating (24 last year) including 11 countries in Africa (4 last year).

Consistent with previous years, the majority of respondents were from the United States (79%) US participation in previous years: 89% 2016, 69% 2017, 74% 2018, 81% 2019, 73% 2020, 70% 2021, 65% 2022

Other countries who participated included: Ireland, New Zealand, Lesotho, Philippines, Bangladesh, Egypt, Germany, Haiti, India, Iraq, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Middle East, Nepal, Pakistan, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Italy, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, The Caribbean, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia

Primary Countries Represented

Headquarters Location	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
United States	999	79%
Canada	121	8%
UK	58	5%
Australia	35	3%
Other	64	6%

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Types of Organizations

What Types of Organizations Were Represented?

As with previous years, nonprofits comprised the majority of responding organizations (77.1%) followed by government agencies (12.5%).

This breakdown has been consistent through the history of the survey.

2.7% selected Other.

Organization Types – 8-Year Trends

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Nonprofit	73.4%	66.2%	70.1%	77.7%	78.8%	77.2%	76.6%	77.7%
Govt Agency	17.7%	13.7%	12.6%	15.6%	13.9%	13.4%	14.1%	12.5%
Corp/Small Business	1.0%	1.0%	0.7%	2.9%	1.9%	2.3%	2.3%	4.6%
Educational Institution/ School District	N/A	3.0%	2.4%	3.5%	2.6%	2.9%	2.8%	2.1%
Church or Congregation	1.0%	0.9%	0.5%	.2%	0.5%	0.8%	2.0%	0.4%

Size of Organizations

How Many Paid Workers Are Currently Employed?

To determine the size of the organizations represented in the survey results, rather than local offices, we asked - How many paid employees are at your organization (enterprise wide)?
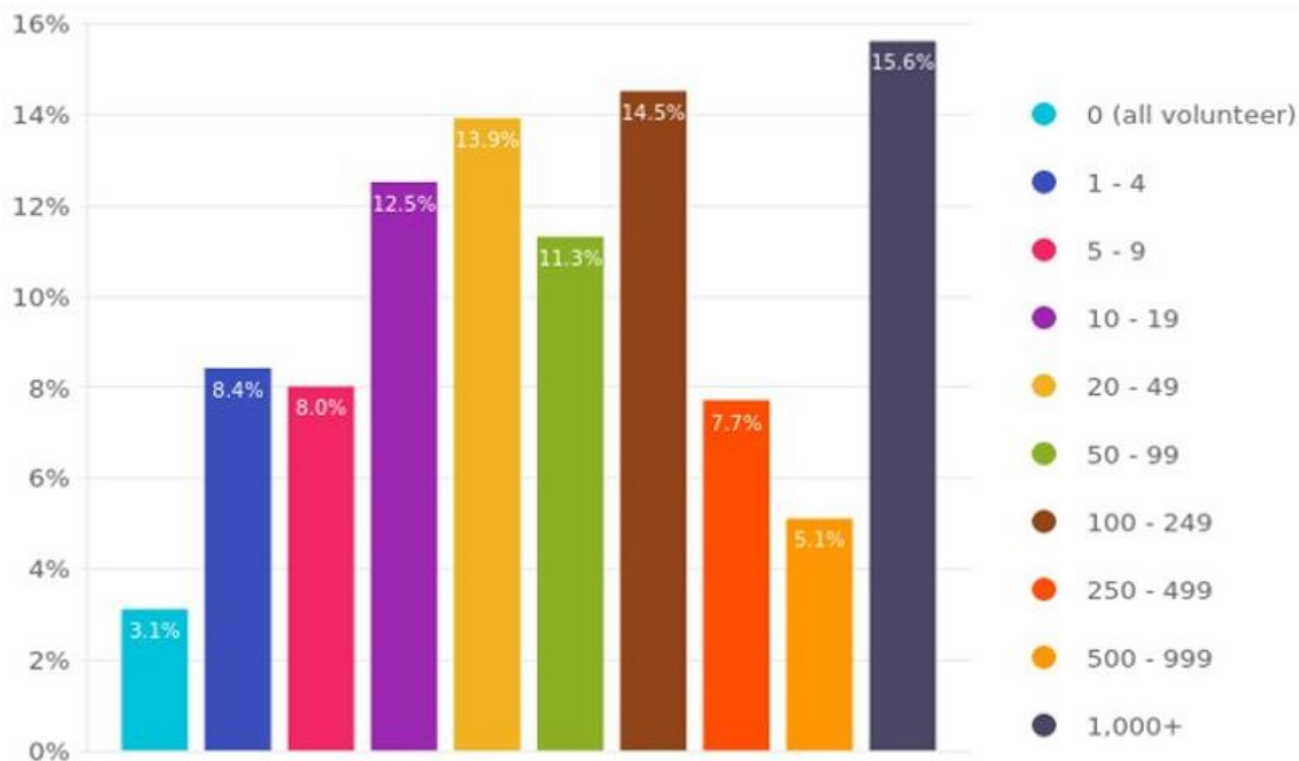
We found – as in previous years – that a wide range or organization sizes participate. The average size of a responding organization was 50-99, up from 20-49 employees last year.

Nearly half (45.9%) are small to medium-size volunteer-involving organizations with fewer than 50 employees, including 3.1% that have no paid staff and 19.5% with less than 10 paid employees. 25.8% represented mid-size organizations with 50-249 employees. Another 28.4% are large organizations with have 250 or more employees.

The average size of all responding organizations was 50-99, up from 20-49 employees last year.

Organization Size - # of Employees

Mean: 6.0 (50-99 employees)

Legend:
- 0 (all volunteer)
- 1 - 4
- 5 - 9
- 10 - 19
- 20 - 49
- 50 - 99
- 100 - 249
- 250 - 499
- 500 - 999
- 1,000+

Bar values: 3.1%, 8.4%, 8.0%, 12.5%, 13.9%, 11.3%, 14.5%, 7.7%, 5.1%, 15.6%

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Age of Respondents

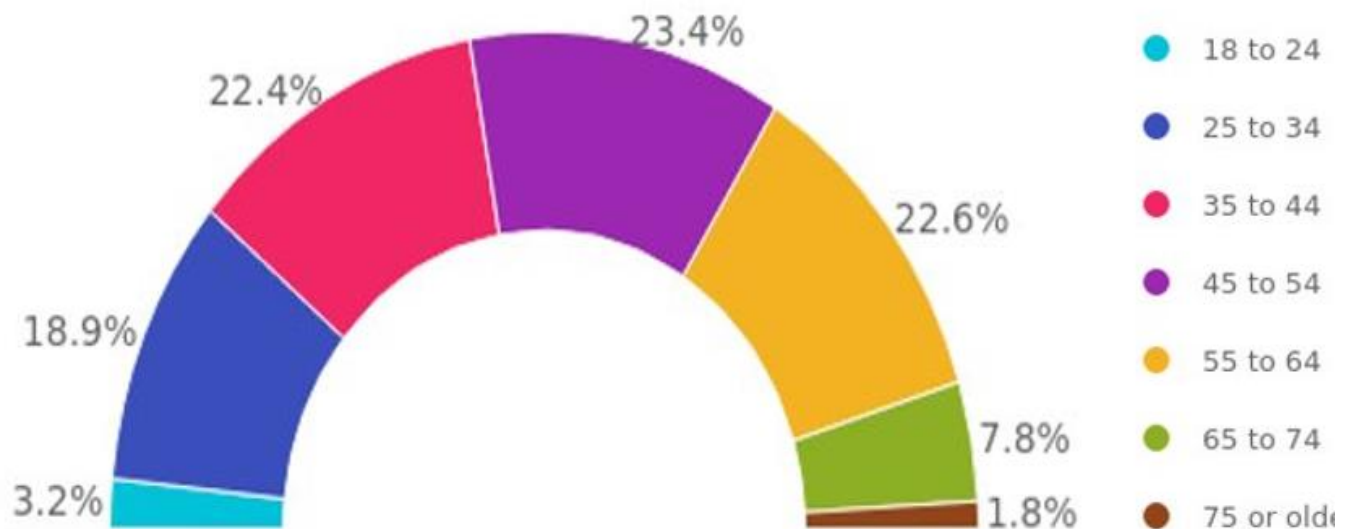## Demographics Remain Consistent Over Eight Years

Volunteer managers consistently represent multiple generations. And there was no indication that there has been an outmigration of older volunteer managers.

- Mean 3.7 (or average age of all respondents) was 35-44 years old
- Median 4.0 (the middle value with half of respondents above and half below) was 45 to 54 years old

In 2020 / 2021 / 2022
- 18 to 24: 2.2% / 2.2% / 1.4%
- 25 to 34: 23.4% / 20.5% / 19.6%
- 35 to 44: 21.0% / 21.7% / 23.9%
- 45 to 54: 23.5% / 21.9% / 24.8%
- 55 to 64: 22.9% / 26.2% / 21.7%
- 65 to 74: 5.5% / 5.2% / 6.2%
- 75+:   0.5% / 0.8% / 0.8%

Age of Volunteer Managers

Legend:
- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 or older

23.4%
22.4%
18.9%
3.2%
22.6%
7.8%
1.8%

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Race, Ethnicit(ies), & Gender

## Diversity in Volunteer Management Continues to Lag

The field of volunteer management continues to document a homogenous field of professionals.
- Female 87.9 (88.1% in 2022, 87% in 2020, 88% in 2019, 91% in 2018, 88% in 2016/17)
- White 83.8% (84% in 2020, 91% in 2019/2018, 89% in 2016/17)

This year reflects a slight shift in the diversity of our sector over the past four years, with a 3.1% drop in White volunteer managers participating since our 2019 report, in which 91% indicated their race/ethnicity was White.

Which RACE(s)/ETHNICIT(ies) best describes you? (choose all that apply)
- White/Caucasian/European Descent – 88.0%
- Black/African American/African - 5.21%
- Hispanic/Latinx - 4.2%
- Asian/South Asian - 3.2%
- American Indian, Alaska Native or Aleut - 1.1%
- Middle Eastern/North African - 0.6%
- Caribbean - 0.2%
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander - 0.2%
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander - 0.1%
- Prefer to self-describe - 2.5%

Respondent Race/Ethnicit(ies)

Gender Identity
- Woman - 88%
- Man - 11%
- Non-binary - 2%
- Trans - .002%
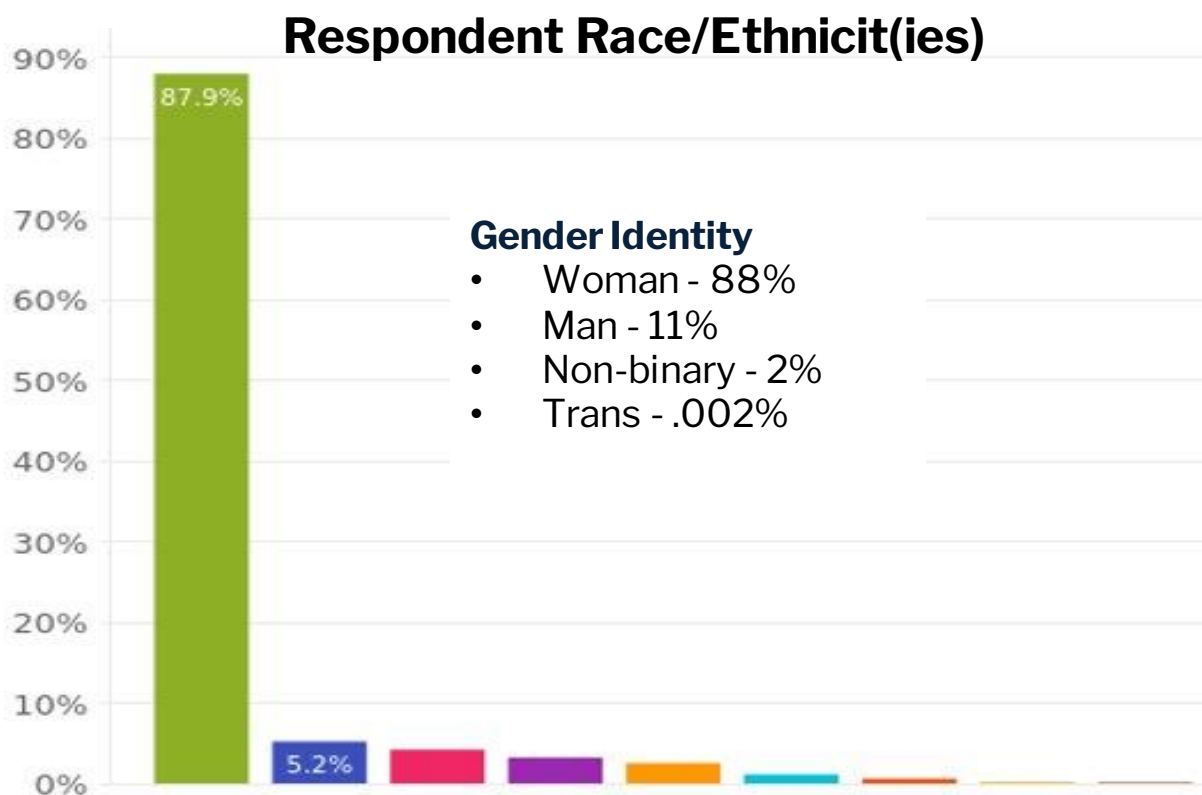
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Respondent Diversity

How Nonprofit Diversity Compares to the Workforce

How does the diversity of volunteer managers compare with other workforces? Is diversity an issue within the nonprofit workforce in general?

According to the **Independent Sector**, in the third quarter of 2022, the nonprofit workforce in the US continued a trend of losing racial and ethnic diversity. The proportion of White workers (77.8%) is higher than pre-pandemic levels in the nonprofit sector (approximately 70%) and is slightly higher than the overall workforce (76.8%).

Volunteer managers represent significantly less racial diversity than the nonprofit workforce, with only 8.7% people of color and 13.5% more White workers as a whole than nonprofits in general.

- US Workforce - White – 76.8%
- US Nonprofit Workforce (September 2022)
    - White – 77.8%
    - Black/African American/African - 12.2%
    - Hispanic/Latinx – 10.8%
    - Asian/South Asian – 7.0%
    - American Indian, Alaska Native or Aleut - 1.0%
    - Multi-racial – 2.1%

How Diverse Are We?

76.8% White — US General Workforce

77.8% White — US Nonprofit Workforce

91.3% White — US Volunteer Managers

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ABOUT THEIR WORK

Respondent Tenure

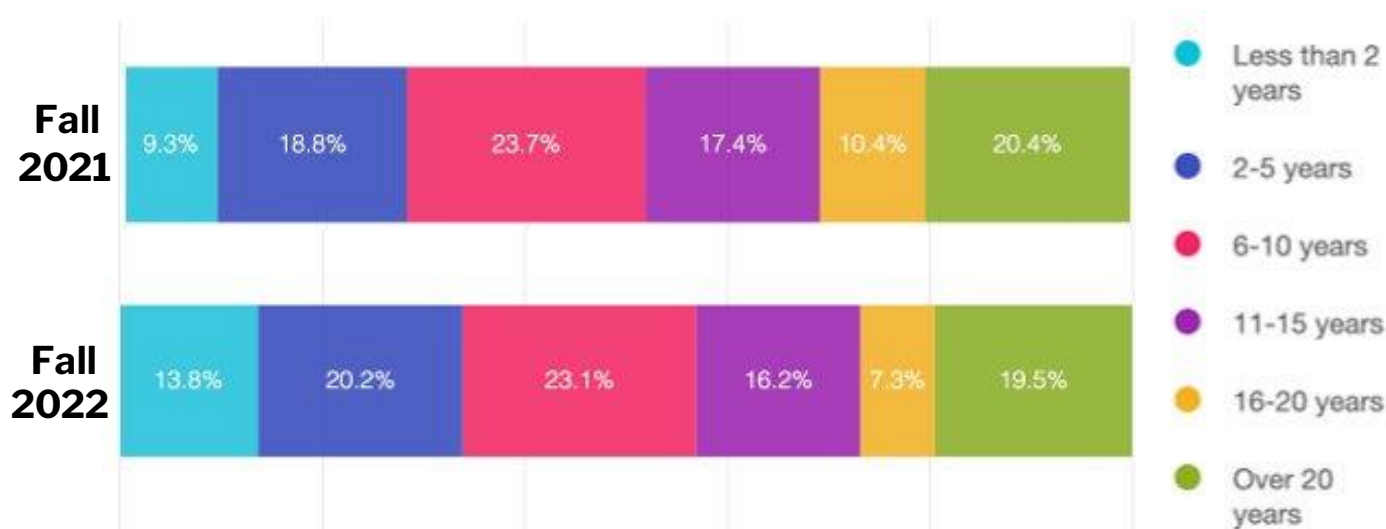## Professional Characteristics Remain Consistent

Respondents have consistently reported a wide range of years of experience in the field (both paid or unpaid). This survey represents the perspectives of both new and seasoned volunteer managers, but skews toward a more experienced group. The mean (or average) was 3.4 or 6-10 years of experience in the field (3.6 in 2022), representing a slight downward trend in years of experience.

Also, although we hear discussion anecdotally of turnover in the field from our network, we found that our data do not suggest a mass exodus of experienced leaders of volunteers due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Below are the trends for early, mid, and late career volunteer managers since 2019:

- **5 years or less experience** – 2023 (34%), 2022 (28.1%), 2021(33%), 2020 (36%), 2019 (36%)
- **Over 10 years experience** – 2023 (43%), 2022 (48.2%), 2021 (45%), 2020 (42%), 2019 (40%)
- **Over 20 years experience** – 2023 (19.5%), 2022 (20.4%), 2021 (21%), 2020 (16%), 2019 (16%)

Years of Volunteer Administration/ Management Experience (volunteer and paid combined)

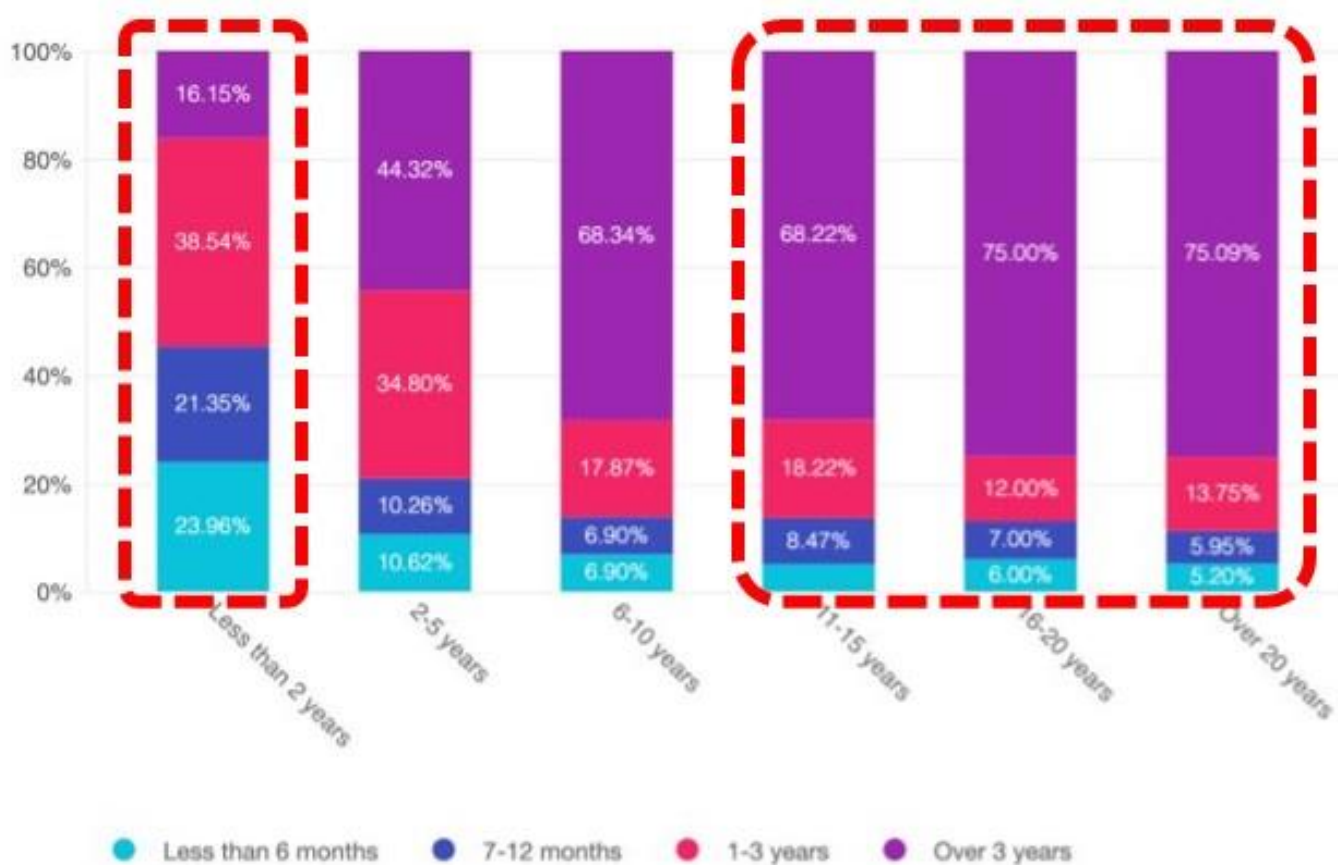|	Less than 2 years	2-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	Over 20 years
Fall 2021	9.3%	18.8%	23.7%	17.4%	10.4%	20.4%
Fall 2022	13.8%	20.2%	23.1%	16.2%	7.3%	19.5%

Years with Current Employer

Respondents Remained with Employers Through COVID

The majority of respondents (58.2%) had remained with their current employer for over three years, indicating that most had stayed with that employer through COVID. The Mean (or average) was 3.3 or 1-3 years.

When the number of years in the field are compared to total years with current employer, the vast majority of seasoned volunteer managers appear to have been with their organization since before the pandemic. And some have moved from existing roles into volunteer administration inside their organizations.

Note: These data only represent active leaders of volunteers (the disqualifying question for the survey was - Do you currently recruit, coordinate, match, place, supervise, or manage volunteers either as part of your job or as a volunteer?). So, these data do not reflect the level of job churn in the field overall, only in those who are still working.

Tenure x Years with Current Employer

	Less than 2 years	2-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	Over 20 years
Over 3 years	16.15%	44.32%	68.34%	68.22%	75.00%	75.09%
1-3 years	38.54%	34.80%	17.87%	18.22%	12.00%	13.75%
7-12 months	21.35%	10.26%	6.90%	8.47%	7.00%	5.95%
Less than 6 months	23.96%	10.62%	6.90%		6.00%	5.20%

Legend: ● Less than 6 months ● 7-12 months ● 1-3 years ● Over 3 years

Job Title, Status, & Context

Respondents Are Overwhelmingly Full-Time Coordinators

The overwhelming majority of leaders of volunteers classify themselves as full-time (83%) paid (90%) employees. 6% are unpaid volunteers.

Based on these trends, the mix of job titles has not changed much over the years, but the total percentage of those that are called Coordinators, Managers, and Directors (versus other job titles) have increased as a whole.

- **Coordinator** (36% 2019, 41% 2018, 43% 2017, 39% 2016)
- **Manager** (27% 2019, 25% 2018, 26% 2017, 27% 2016)
- **Director** (16% 2019, 17% 2018, 16% 2017, 19% 2016)

Note: In terms of job title and work tenure, those that worked 25% or less in volunteer management were more likely to have the word "Director" in their title. This may indicate that many with Director in their title may not be "Volunteer Directors."

The majority of respondents work within a central volunteer services department or individual volunteer program:
- Volunteer services department that places volunteers inside an organization (46.9%)
- Individual leader of volunteers within a program or department (32.8%)
- Volunteer center that supports a network of organizations (5.9%)
- Central enterprise office that supports a network of local affiliates or chapters (5.0%)
- Other (9.4%)

Job Title

- **Coordinator 38.8%**
  (36% 2019, 41% 2018, 43% 2017, 39% 2016)
- **Manager 30.0%**
  (27% 2019, 25% 2018, 26% 2017, 27% 2016)
- **Director 17.3%**
  (16% 2019, 17% 2018, 16% 2017, 19% 2016)
- **Other 13.9%**

Employment Status

- **Full-Time (80%)**
- **Part-Time (12%)**
- **Volunteer (6%)**

Context of Work

- **Volunteer Services Department (47%)**
- **Individual Program (33%)**
- **Volunteer Center (6%)**
- **Enterprise Office (5%)**
- **Other 9%**

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Top 5 Challenges

Recruitment Is Consistently The Biggest Challenge Faced

The first year of COVID, caring for existing volunteers disrupted five years of trends faced by volunteer management. However, over the past two years, recruiting new volunteers has returned to the top of the list, gaining 5 percentage points in the last year.

Currently, one out of three (33%) of all survey respondents noted this as a top challenge in their open-ended response to our question "What's your #1 BIGGEST volunteer management CHALLENGE right now," with highest share of challenges noted since 2019.

- **Recruitment (32.8%)** By far the biggest challenge reported this year. Many respondents indicated that they struggled to recruit effectively in a post-pandemic world and that the strategies they used before were no longer working. This category was **up 5%** from last year.
- **Time (13.8%)** Working to meet the same expectations with fewer staff, managing increased workloads, and dividing time between competing priorities – these challenges all contributed to an overall sense of not having enough time to do it all well. This category saw an **increase of 5%** from last year.
- **Respect & Buy-In (9.6%)** Building back after the pandemic requires the buy-in of executive management and staff, and the willingness of departments to welcome volunteers back to service. These were both challenges this year. Results in this category were **on par with last year**'s survey.
- **Roles & Matching (9.0%)** Volunteers are coming back in pre-covid numbers but matching them to limited available roles and designing meaningful work to keep them engaged were both challenges this year. This category was **up 3%** from last year.
- **Supervision (6.8%)** The two biggest challenges reported in this category were maintaining shift coverage and keeping up the motivation of volunteers. This category is **down about 4%** from last year.

Top 5 Challenges – 8-Year Trends

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Recruitment (25%)	Recruitment (24%)	Recruitment (31%)	Recruitment (33%)	Recruitment (30%)	Supervision (18%)	Recruitment (28%)	Recruitment (33%)
Support & Buy-In (9%)	Respect & Reliability (16%)	Respect & Buy-In (14%)	Respect & Buy-In (13%)	Respect & Buy-In (13%)	Retention (16%)	Change Management (13%)	Time (14%)
Time (9%)	Roles & Matching (9%)	Retention (13%)	Retention (9%)	Time (11%)	Recruitment (16%)	Supervision (11%)	Respect & Buy-In (10%)
Financial Investment (7%)	Retention (8%)	Roles & Matching (10%)	Roles & Matching (9%)	Roles & Matching (10%)	Roles & Matching (12%)	Retention (10%)	Roles & Matching (10%)
Retention (6%)	Time (8%)	Time (8%)	Time (7%)	Retention (9%)	Change Management (9%)	Respect & Buy-In (9%)	Supervision (7%)

Top 5 Challenges: Mood

How Respondents Are Feeling About Current Challenges

- While many obstacles were cited by respondents as their top challenge, a sentiment analysis of the 1,329 open-ended comments indicate optimism in the field overall.

- The breakdown is as follows:
    - **Negative** - 35.4%
    - **Neutral** - 18.5%
    - **Happy** - 46.2%

- The key emotions reported by the survey software algorithm, were the following:

    - Anger - 22.3%
    - Disappointment - 11.8%
    - Sarcasm - 1.3%
    - Neutral - 18.5%
    - Happy - 40.0%
    - Extremely Happy - 6.2%

Respondent Primary Sentiments

22.25%   11.76% 1.27%   18.53%   40.02%   6.18%

Primary Sentiments
- Anger - 22.3%
- Disappointment - 11.8%
- Sarcasm - 1.3%
- Neutral - 18.5%
- Happy - 40.0%
- Extremely Happy - 6.2%

VOLUNTEER CAPACITY

Active Volunteer Trends

Active Volunteer Average Back to Pre-Covid Levels

Over the past two years, COVID has had a significant impact on volunteer capacity, in terms of active volunteers.

However, it appears that the field has bounced back to previous levels, with the mean (or average) quantity band reporting higher than pre-COVID levels.

Below is the history in recent years:

- Pre-COVID Mean: 4.8 (approx. 101-250 active volunteers)
- Fall 2020 Mean: 3.9 (approx. 51-100 active volunteers)
- Fall 2021 Mean: 3.9 (approx. 51-100 active volunteers)
- Fall 2022 Mean: 5 (approx. 51-100 active volunteers)

Active Volunteers: Last Four Years

Before COVID Mean: 4.8 (approx. 101-250 active volunteers)
Fall 2020 Mean: 3.9 (approx. 51-100 active volunteers)
Fall 2021 Mean: 3.9 (approx. 51-100 active volunteers)
Fall 2022 Mean: 5.0 (approx. 51-100 active volunteers)

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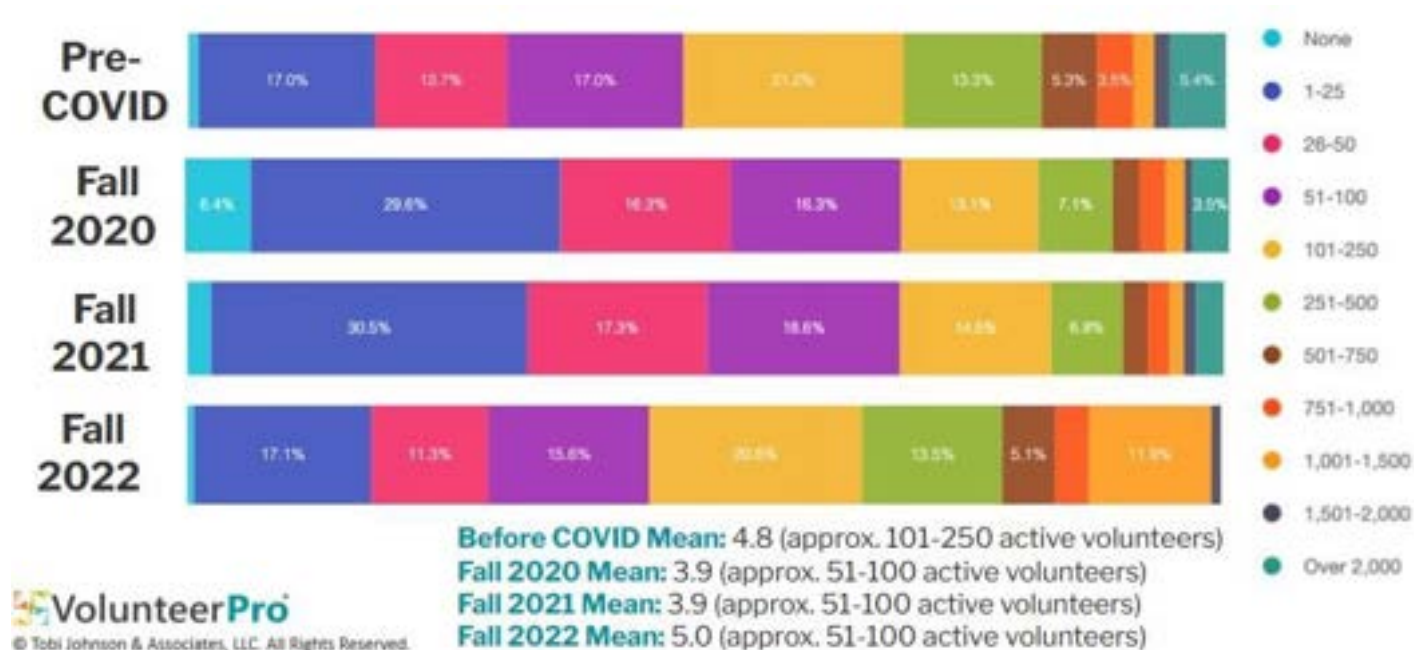
Types of Volunteer Roles

## In What Roles Are Respondents Engaging Volunteers?

We asked – In WHAT ROLES are volunteers engaged? (choose as many as apply). Traditional, long-term volunteer roles were by far the most popular types of volunteer roles with 86% of organizations engaging volunteers in this way.

Special events (73%) and short-term projects (67%) were also popular ways to engage the community. Nearly half (43%) currently engage remote or virtual volunteers.

Below is the full break down:

- Long-term/Regular Roles 86.3%
- Special Events 73.1%
- Short-term Projects 67.4%
- Governance/Boards 47.5%
- Remote/Virtual 43.2%
- Team Leadership 26.9%
- Pro-Bono/Professional 25.1%
- Other 14.4%

Current Volunteer Roles

Legend: Long-term/Regular Roles, Special Events, Short-term Projects, Governance/Boards, Remote/Virtual, Team Leadership, Pro-Bono/Professional, Other
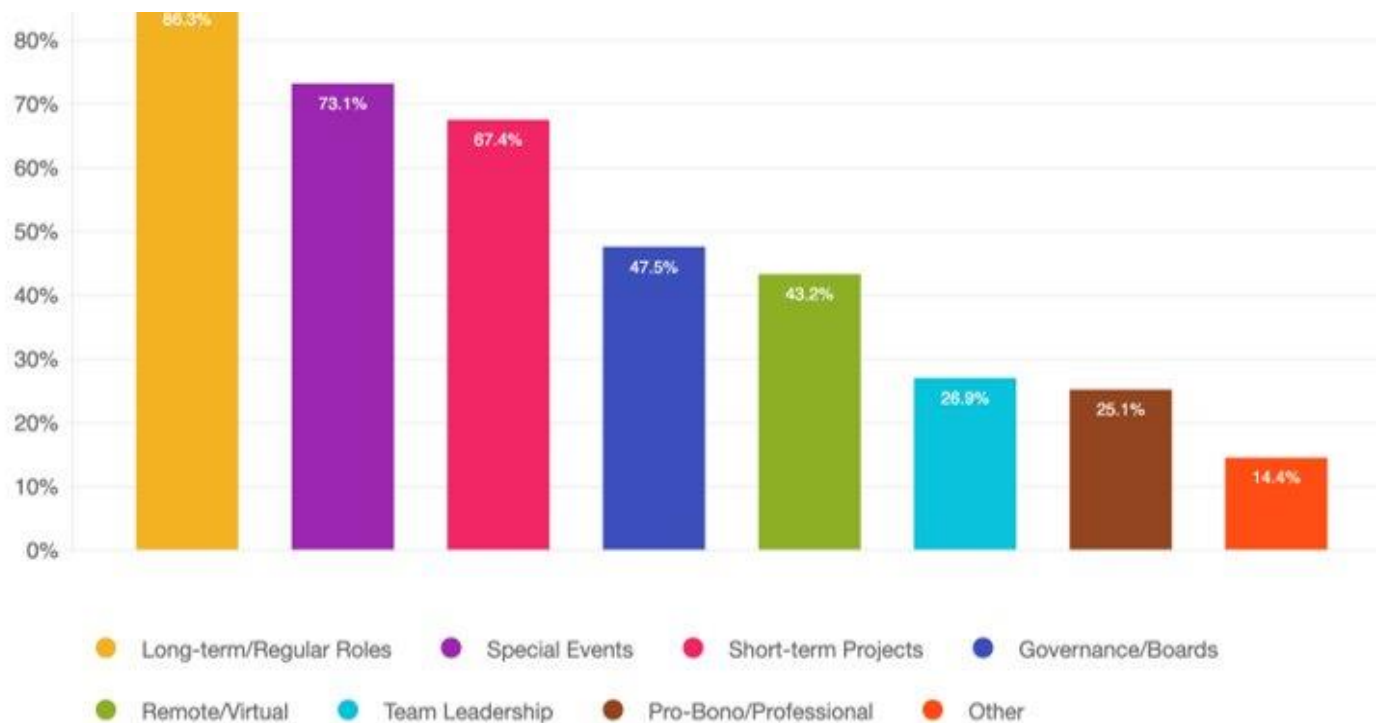
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Impact of COVID On Capacity

Keeping Doors Open for Volunteers Was A Challenge

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the ability or willingness of organizations to be able to keep their doors open for volunteer involvement.

In last year's survey, a vast majority of organizations (70%) have decreased or significantly decreased the number of opportunities available to volunteers as a result of COVID.

This year, we asked - How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the NUMBER of ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS at your organization? How has it changed between 2019 and now? The vast majority reported that their total numbers had decreased (79%).

- **Decreased** - 65.0%
- **Stayed the same** - 15.9%
- **Increased** - 11.1%
- **Not sure** - 8.1%

Impact of COVID on Volunteer Capacity

Last year, 70% had decreased or significantly decreased available volunteer opportunities

This year, 65% report decreased numbers of volunteers
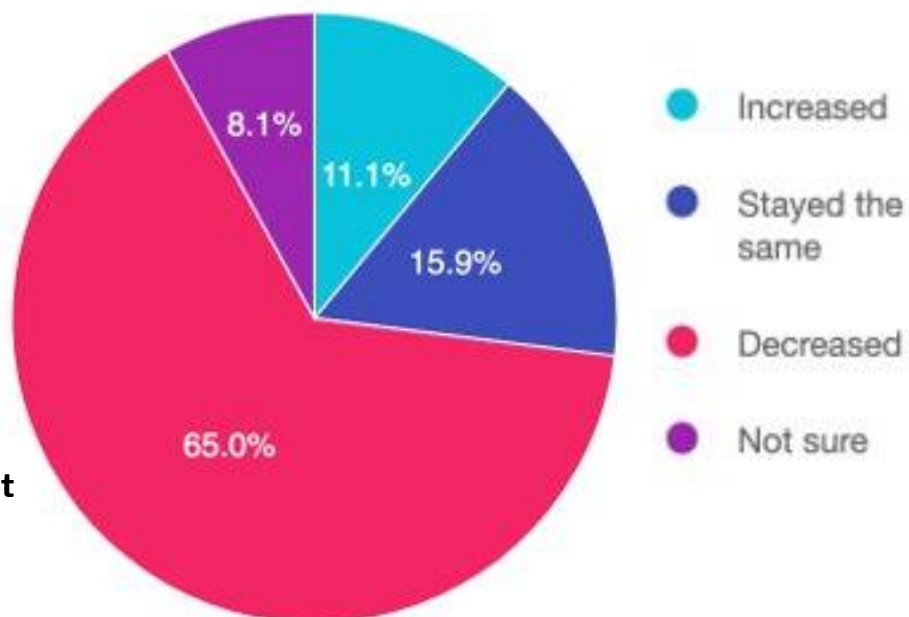
Volunteer Capacity: Roles

To What Extent Are Volunteer Positions Filled?

We asked - How would you rate your CURRENT VOLUNTEER CAPACITY? To what extent are needed roles filled?

Two-thirds (61.2%) reported their current capacity as Moderate, with a mean (or average) of 2.8, or Limited.

So, while the total number of active volunteers reported by respondents overall indicates a return to pre-pandemic levels, this does not indicate a fulfillment of volunteers in needed roles. This may mean that volunteers are working, but not within the roles that are needed or that the need for volunteers has expanded overall.

Current Volunteer Capacity Rating

61.2%

25.4%

9.7%

Legend:
- None
- Limited
- Moderate
- Full
- Not sure
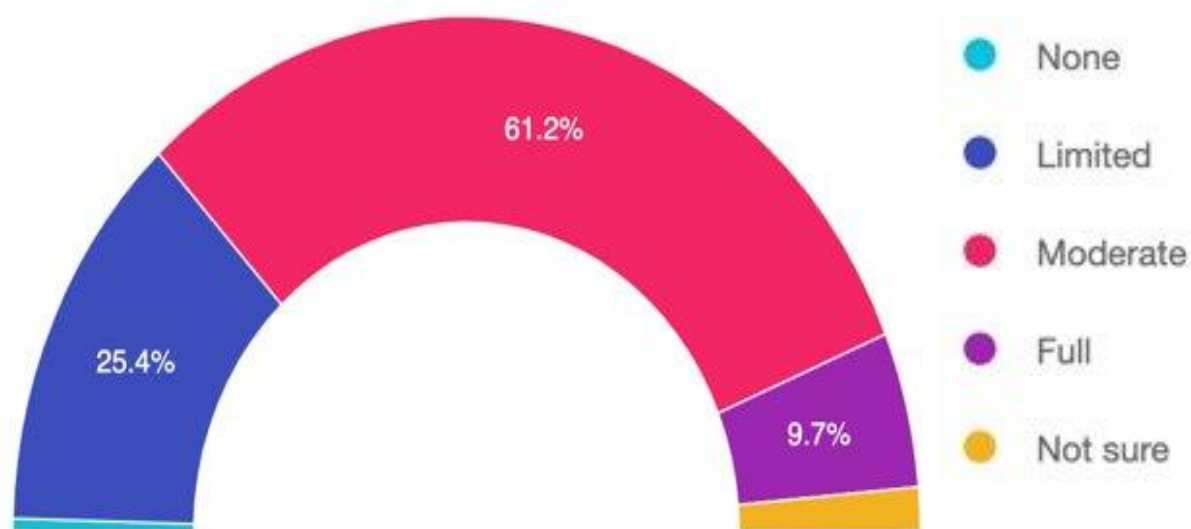
"Our biggest challenge is ensuring volunteers have meaningful roles that are satisfying to them and beneficial to the organization. We have had a significant increase in volunteer numbers and do not have enough meaningful positions to accommodate everyone and we do not want to give them busywork. We are working to identify, prioritize, and develop training for the most new positions."

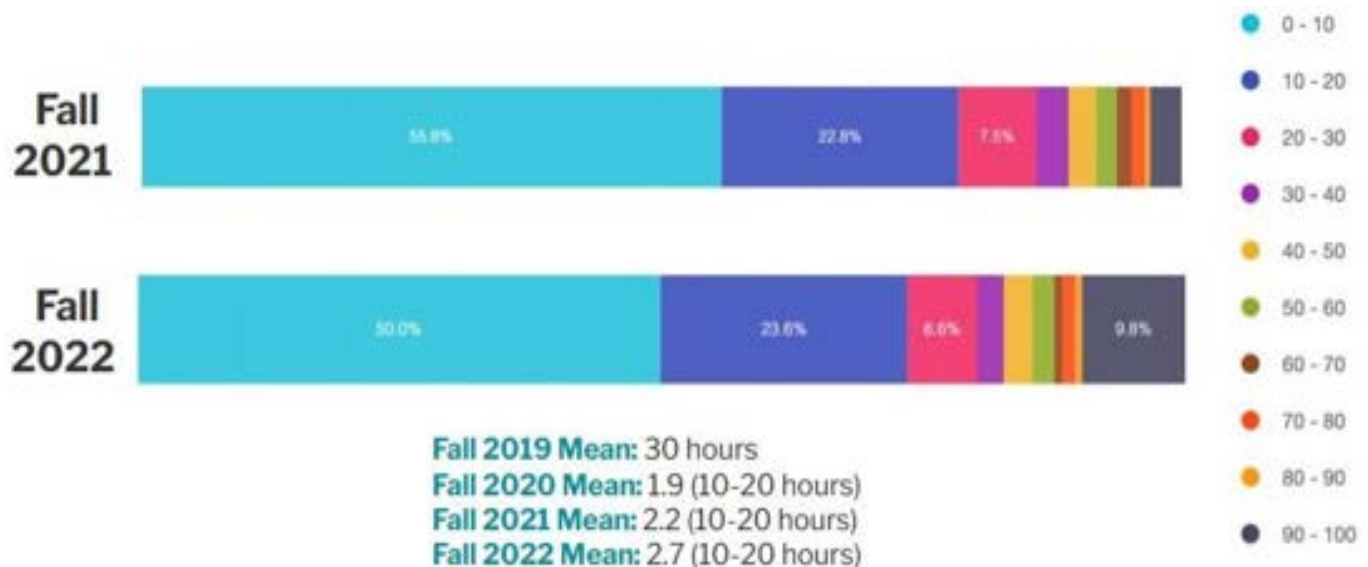VolunteerPro®

Monthly Volunteer Hours

To What Extent Are Volunteer Positions Filled?

There are positive signs that volunteer capacity is rebuilding both in numbers of volunteers as well as average number of hours contributed per month. Although, this metric is still lagging. While the mean (or average) is 2.7 or 10-20 hours per month per volunteer, the average pre-COVID was 30 hours per month.

- Fall 2019 Mean: 30 hours
- Fall 2020 Mean: 1.9 (10-20 hours)
- Fall 2021 Mean: 2.2 (10-20 hours)
- Fall 2022 Mean: 2.7 (10-20 hours)

Note: In the 2020 survey we collected exact numbers of hours. In 2021, we requested that respondents select a specific range of hours.

Average Monthly Hours Per Volunteer

Fall 2019 Mean: 30 hours
Fall 2020 Mean: 1.9 (10-20 hours)
Fall 2021 Mean: 2.2 (10-20 hours)
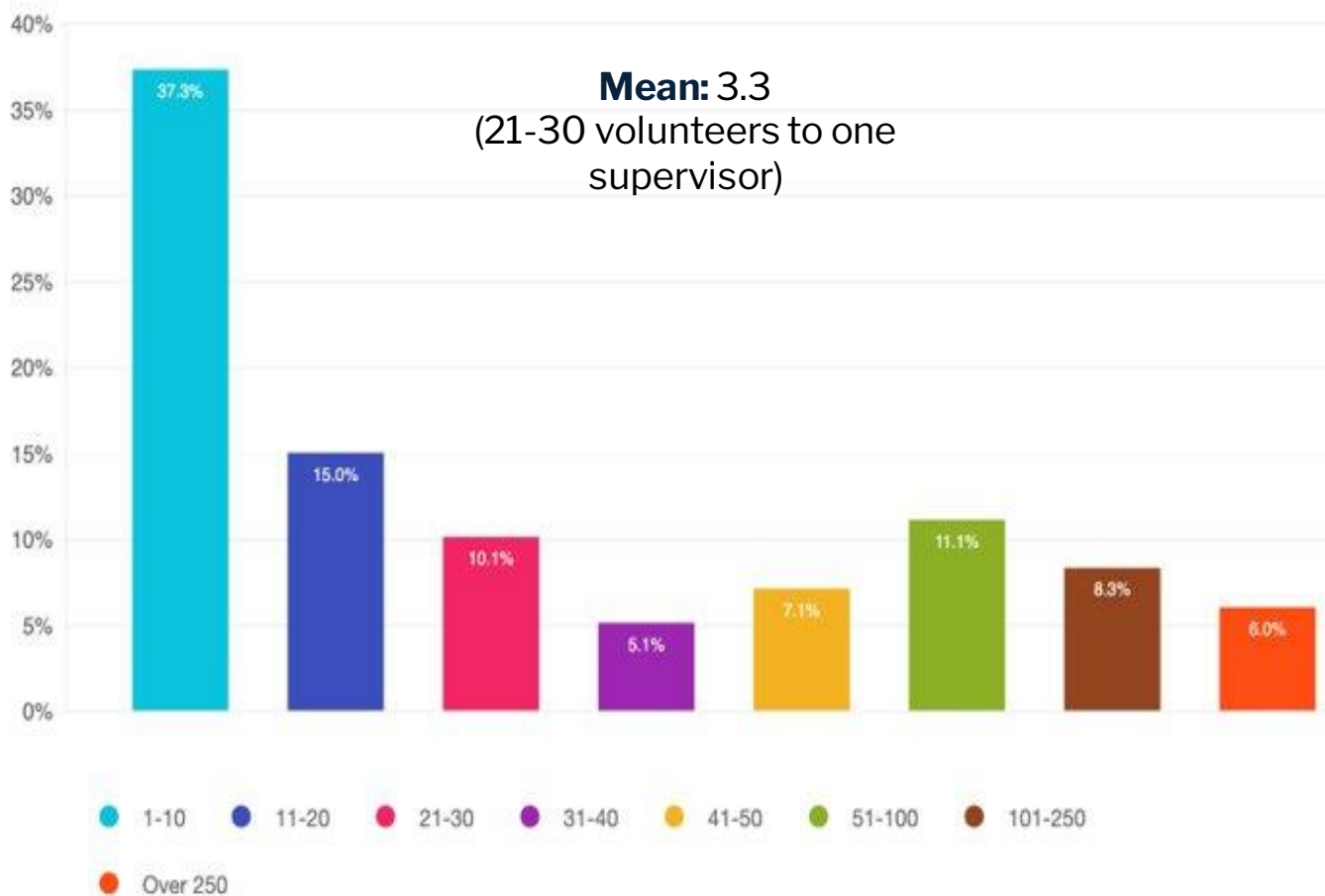**Fall 2022 Mean:** 2.7 (10-20 hours)

Volunteer-To-Supervisor Ratio

How Many Volunteers Do Leaders Directly Supervise?

We asked - In general, what is your VOLUNTEER TO SUPERVISOR RATIO? How many volunteers does each leader (paid or volunteer) DIRECTLY SUPERVISE or support? (skip this question if you are not sure)

The Mean (or average) was 3.3 (or 21-30 volunteers to one supervisor), with the vast majority of organizations (37.3%) reporting that supervisors were responsible for leading 1-10 volunteers.

of Volunteers Directly Supervised

Mean: 3.3
(21-30 volunteers to one supervisor)

Bar chart "# of Volunteers Directly Supervised" with values: 1-10: 37.3%, 11-20: 15.0%, 21-30: 10.1%, 31-40: 5.1%, 41-50: 7.1%, 51-100: 11.1%, 101-250: 8.3%, Over 250: 6.0%

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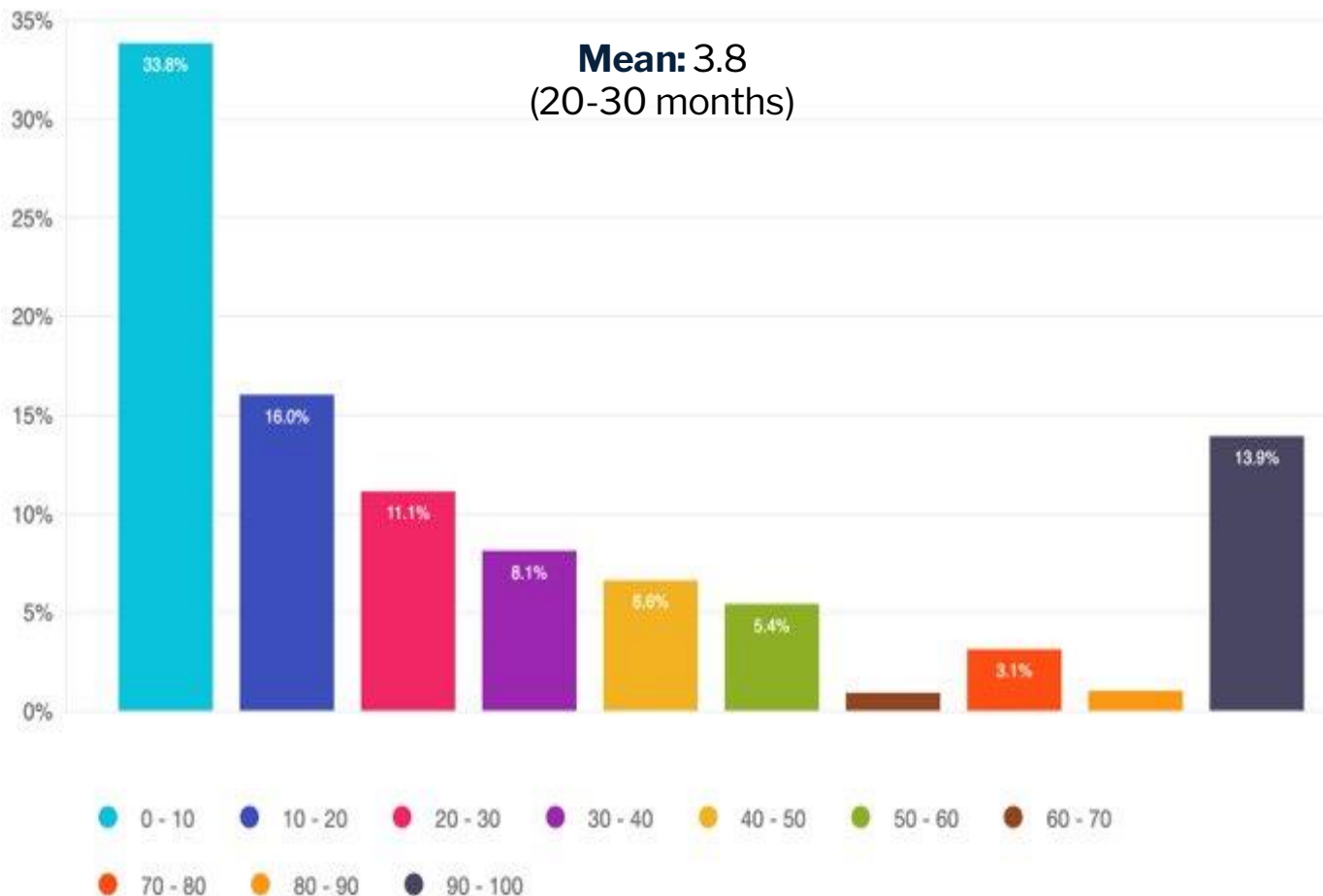# Volunteer Retention (Months)

How Long Are Volunteers Staying At Organizations?

We asked - On average, how many TOTAL MONTHS do volunteers stay ACTIVE with your organization? Choose 100 for 100+ months. (skip this question if you do not track average volunteer tenure or are not sure)

While the mean (or average) was 3.9 (or 20-30 months) for all organizations and 3.8 (20-30 months) for those that indicated they engaged volunteers in Long-term/Regular roles.

However, one-third of organizations (33.8%) retained their volunteers for 0-10 months, or less than a year. Over one in ten (13.9%) reported retaining volunteers for at least eight years on average.

Average Months Per Volunteer

Mean: 3.8
(20-30 months)

Legend:
- 0 - 10
- 10 - 20
- 20 - 30
- 30 - 40
- 40 - 50
- 50 - 60
- 60 - 70
- 70 - 80
- 80 - 90
- 90 - 100

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BUDGET & RESOURCES

Volunteer Engagement Goals

Recruitment and Improving Processes are Top Goals

Volunteer recruitment and rebuilding the volunteer base was the top priority for over one-third of volunteer managers (34.1%) with adding new or improved processes (16.1%), boosting volunteer participation (13.2%), and expanding volunteer roles (11.3%) being those that more than one in ten respondents listing as their #1 priority for the next 12 months.

Note: some respondents chose Other and included more than one response, and some listed a response that aligned with an existing option. Where possible, we added these counts to the existing list of closed-ended options.

Top Goals for Volunteer Engagement

Goal	Response %	Response #
Recruit new volunteers	34.1%	518
Put new or improved processes in place	16.1%	245
Boost volunteer participation	13.2%	200
Expand volunteer roles at organization	11.3%	172
Improve volunteer satisfaction/retention	8.2%	125
Diversify my volunteer base	7.7%	117
Get new software set up	3.4%	51
Grow my team of paid staff	2.4%	36
Reduce my workload	1.8%	27
Increase my budget for volunteers	.1%	12
Other (Please specify)	.1%	15

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Budget & Team Size

Budget Averages Are Down Slightly From The Previous Year

In the US, a little over one in four (28.4%) reported annual budgets of $1-$5,000 set aside for the volunteer program (not including staff salaries and benefits) this year, down 1% from our 2019 report.
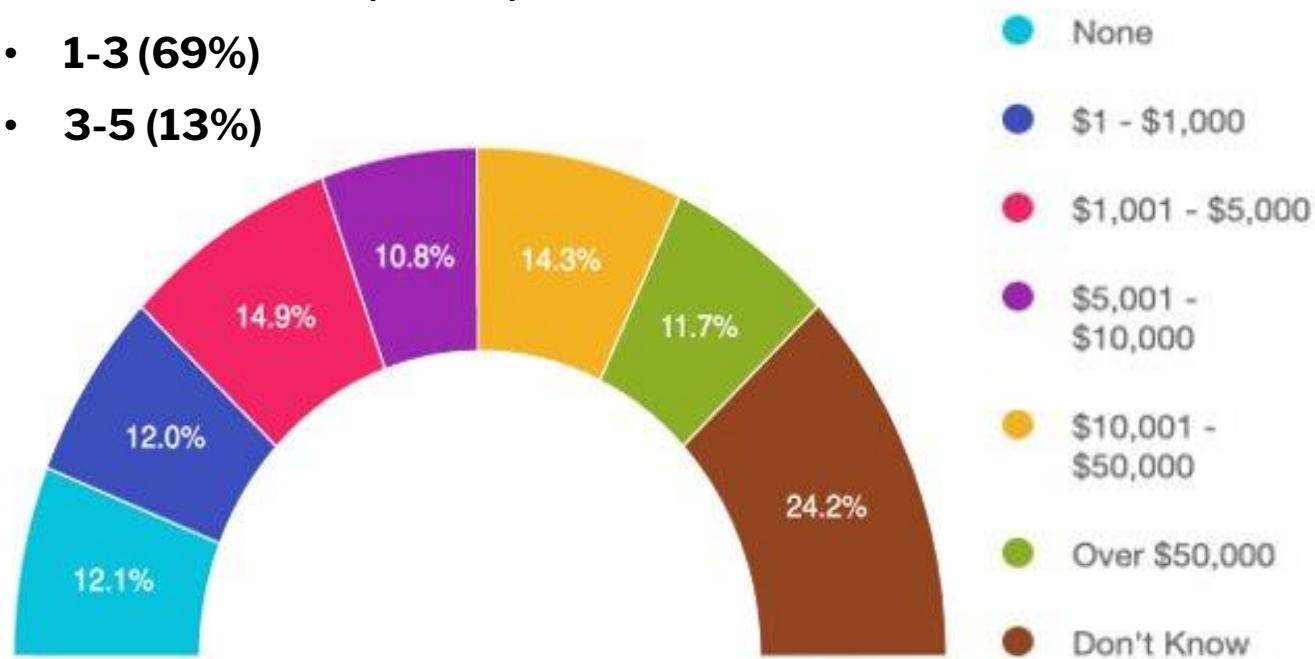
The mean (or average) program budget reported was 4.3 or $5,001-$10,000.

12% of programs had no budget set aside for the volunteer program. 24% did not know their program's budget.

Annual Program Budget (US)

Number on Team (Global)

- **1-3 (69%)**
- **3-5 (13%)**

Legend:
- None
- $1 - $1,000
- $1,001 - $5,000
- $5,001 - $10,000
- $10,001 - $50,000
- Over $50,000
- Don't Know

Chart values: 12.1%, 12.0%, 14.9%, 10.8%, 14.3%, 11.7%, 24.2%

"Even though outside costs are going up, are budget is stagnant, so we are having to do more with less. This has direct impact on morale, adding new recruitment strategies, and other items. There were just job cuts at our organization, so it is challenging to both wonder if your job is safe and increase your volunteer impact."

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Average Annual Budget

## How Budget Affects Performance and Engagement

Our research shows that budget clearly matters when volunteer managers reflect on their performance of their organizations with respect to volunteer engagement.

Over one-quarter (28.2%) of those who rated their organization's progress toward reaching volunteer goals as "it is really bad" also had no annual budget for volunteer engagement, the highest of all budget ranges including those who did not know their budget.

Alternately, those in the 10,001-$50000 annual budget range represented an increased percentage from poor performance (It's really bad) to good performance (I'm happy with It).

Also, a significant number of those who were not sure of their progress were also not sure of their budget.

Progress x Annual Budget
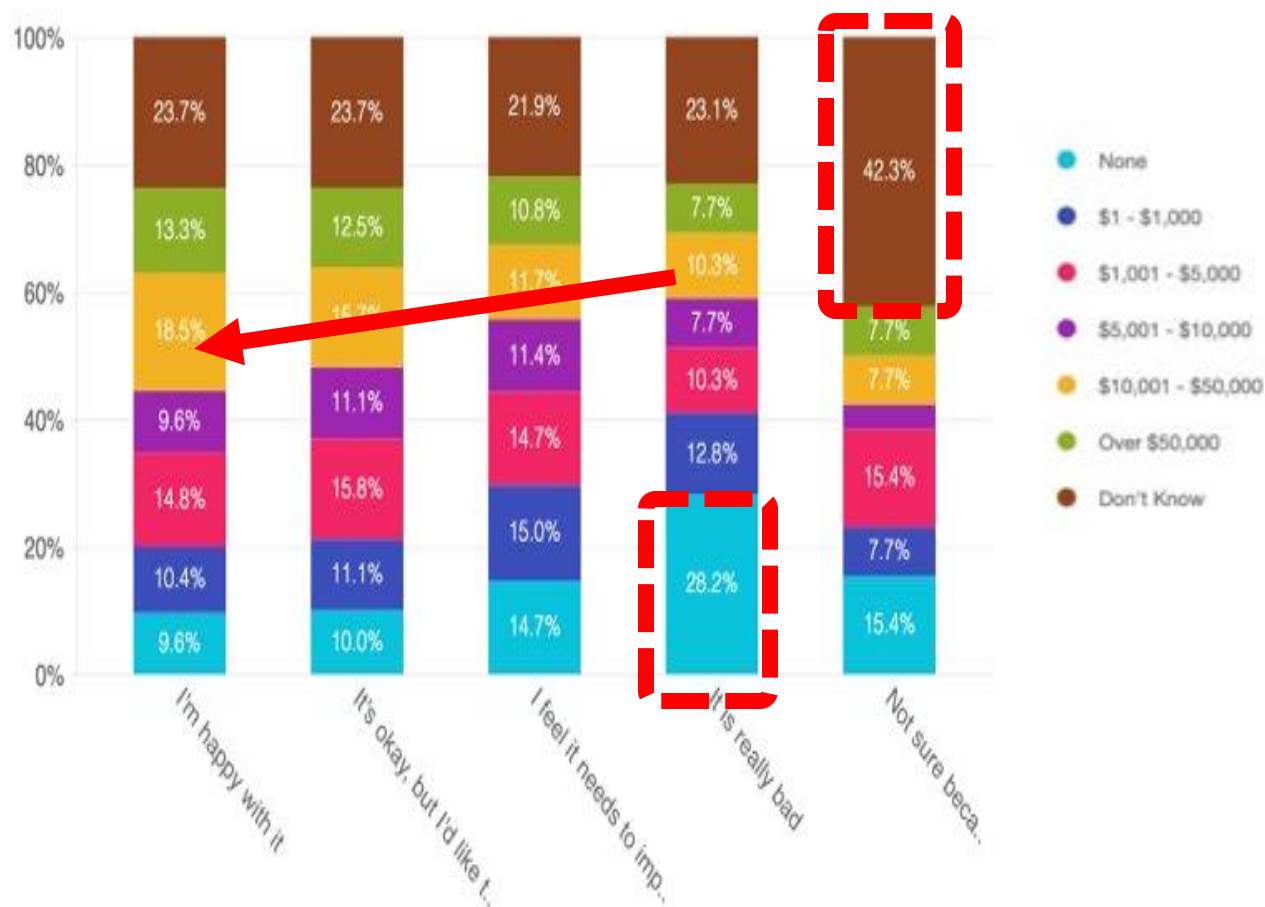
Time Devoted to Volunteers

How Do Volunteer Managers Spend Their Time?

In terms of the human resources and leadership needed to fuel volunteer engagement, volunteer managers continue to juggle more than one task area.

As organizations build back from the pandemic, fewer (47%) spend more than three-quarters of their work hours on volunteer management in an average week (down from 52% in 2022).

Also, while volunteer managers with greater than 10 years of experience in the field were more likely to spend 100% of their work schedule on volunteer program administration, the distribution of work tenure was similar between those who spent 25% or less of their time and those who spent 51-75% of their time on volunteer management tasks.

In addition, those who work in volunteer services departments were more likely to work over three quarters of their time on volunteer administration by a large margin. There as no clear pattern related to length with current employer.

Also, we found that the larger the budget for volunteer services, the more likely the volunteer manager reported devoting more time to volunteer management, indicating that the investment in staff salaries and budget for volunteer engagement are aligned.

% of Time Spent on Volunteer Management

47% spend 76-100% of time on volunteer management (52% in 2022)

Legend: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023
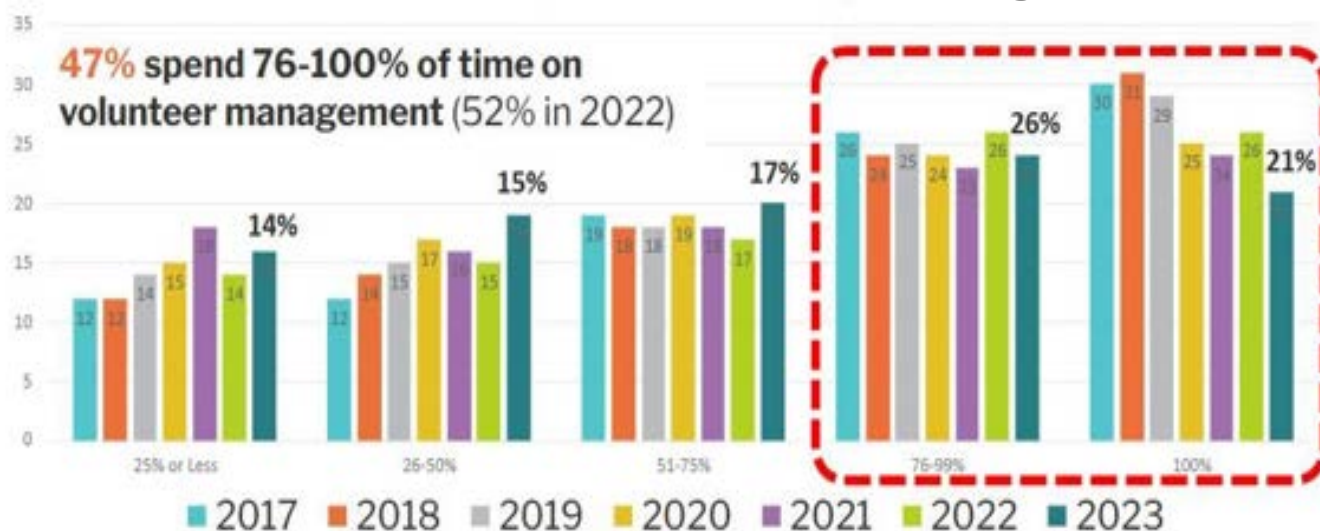
"I currently am juggling my past position and current position at my job, which makes it tricky to focus on managing and recruiting new and current volunteers. Hopefully as we get more staff in our facility, I'll be able to focus more and provide my volunteers with the attention they deserve."

Time Spent: Volunteer Capacity

Volunteer Engagement Directly Related to Capacity

The survey responses reflected a clear connection between the percentage of time dedicated to volunteer engagement and reported volunteer capacity.

The greater percentage of time volunteer coordinators spent on volunteer management, the higher the volunteer capacity rating, or the extent to which volunteer roles were filled (None, Limited, Moderate, Full).

In addition, those who surveyed volunteers to gather feedback where more likely to report higher levels of volunteer capacity. Whether or not the organization tracked monthly volunteer churn rates also appeared to correlate with increased volunteer capacity.

However, there did not appear to be any simple correlation between the tracking volunteer event participation rates, annual retention rates, and new volunteer conversion rates with volunteer capacity.

### Time Spent x Volunteer Capacity

Time Spent: Active Volunteers

How Many Volunteers Are Still Serving A Year Later?

It also appears that time investments correlate with a larger number of volunteers engaged, with a mean (or average) of 3.8 or 26-50 volunteers for those that spend 25% or less on volunteer management and a mean of 5.9 or 101-250 volunteers for those who devote all of their work time to volunteer engagement.

These data do not tell us whether volunteer staffing and resulting capacities are by design, however, we do know that increasing the number of active volunteers is a high priority for many organizations at this time.

## Time Spent x Active Volunteers
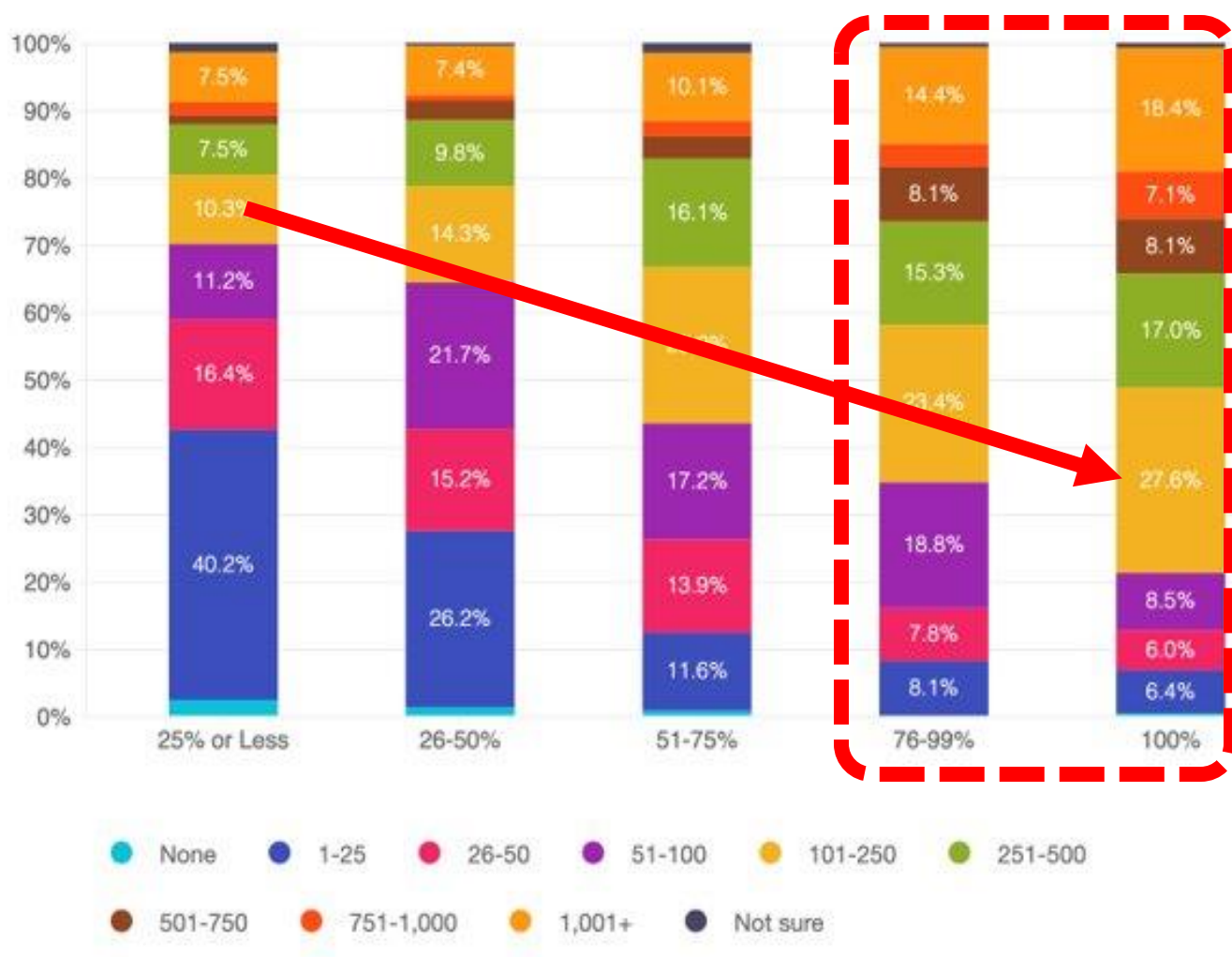
Time Spent: Progress To Goals

Reaching Goals Also Related To Time Managing Volunteers

Self-assessed levels of progress toward volunteer engagement goals were slightly higher for those who spent over half their work time on volunteer management.

In terms of volunteer outcomes, there was little correlation between new volunteer conversion rates and percentage of time spent on volunteer involvement. There was also little correlation between time spent and annual volunteer retention rates. However, most do not track these volunteer outcomes metrics.

Time Spent x Progress To Goals

Legend: ● 25% or Less ● 26-50% ● 51-75% ● 76-99% ● 100%
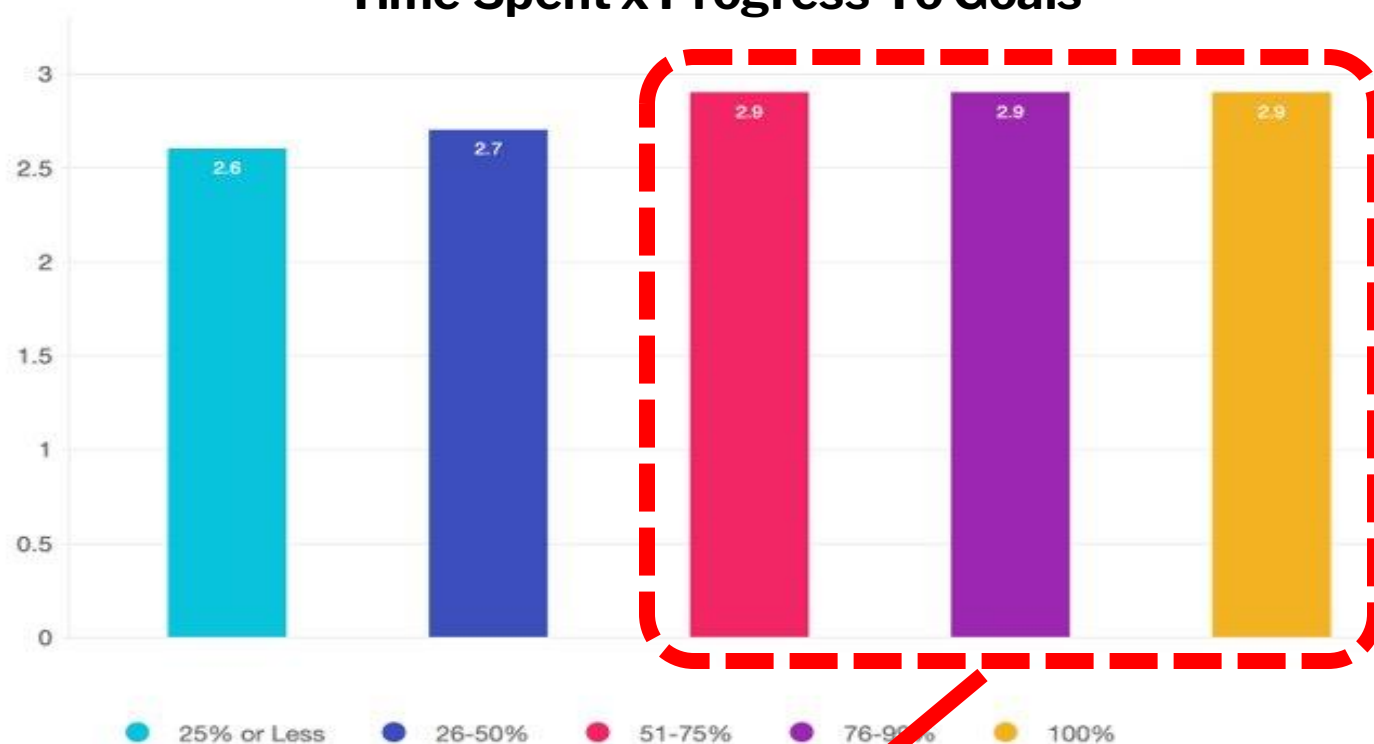
Progress to Goals Rating

- I'm happy with it (1)
- It's okay, but I'd like to improve it (2)
- I feel it needs to improve a lot (3)
- It is really bad (4)
- Not sure because I don't have the data (5)

Respondent Salary Ranges

Reported Salaries Are On The Rise Overall

The average salary for leaders of volunteers in the US was $56,719, representing a significant uptick on overall salary (from $45,475 in 2020).

In Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom salaries also saw an increase over those reported in our 2020 report.

Note: Salaries reports in Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom represented small cohorts of respondents. It's unclear if these represent true averages across professionals in these countries.

Average Annual Salary Trends

Country	2018	2019	2020	2023	2023 USD Equivalent
United States	$45,703 USD	$45,383 USD	$45,475 USD	$56,719 USD	**$56,719 USD**
Canada	$45,432 CAD	$55,840 CAD	$56,758 CAD	$64,602 CAD	**$48,031 USD**
Australia	$50,982 AUD	$66,250 AUD	$70,039 AUD	$70,865 AUD	**$52,687 USD**
United Kingdom	$37,530 GBP	£28,628 GBP	£30,302 GBP	£41,006 GBP	**$49,584 USD**

"It is difficult to keep staff when we cannot pay a competitive wage. I feel that these positions require more work than can be understood and part of that employee satisfaction is being compensated financially for the time, effort and results produced."

Average US Salary

How Average Salary Relates to Size of Program

There appears to be a correlation between the salaries of volunteer mangers in the United States and the number of active volunteers. In all cases, except organizations with 751-1,000 volunteers, the higher the number of volunteers, the higher the salary.

Note: The average salary for those who reported 751-1,000 active volunteers may skew lower because there were a significantly lower number of respondents than other groups.

We collected salary data from other countries; however, there were not enough responses to create statistically valid results for this comparison.

Salary (US) x Active Volunteers

US Mean Salary: $56,719 USD

Number of Active Volunteers							
1-25	26-50	51-11	101-250	251-500	501-750	751-1,000	1,001+
(N=115)	(N=77)	(N=109)	(N=176)	(N=114)	(N=44)	(N=27)	(N=95)
$51,617	$51,605	$52,234	$55,692	$60,429	$61,593	$56,738	$68,197

How Job Title Affects Salary

Respondents With Director Title Receive Higher Salary

Those in the United States with Director in their job title earned significantly more, on average, than other job titles (roughly $14,000 more per year).

There was little difference in salary between Coordinators, Managers, and those who noted Other job titles.

Average Salary x Job Title (US)

Mean All Job Titles: $56,719 USD

Job Title	Salary (US)
Coordinator (N=283)	$57,587 USD
Manager (N=265)	$57,920 USD
Director (N=152)	$72,433 USD
Other (N=72)	$55,221 USD

"Volunteer managers are often a combination of HR, sales/marketing, grant writing, financial/accounting, training/education, community outreach/partnerships, and the list goes on. The competencies, ethics, and reality of this role needs to be better communicated through channels that reach leadership..."
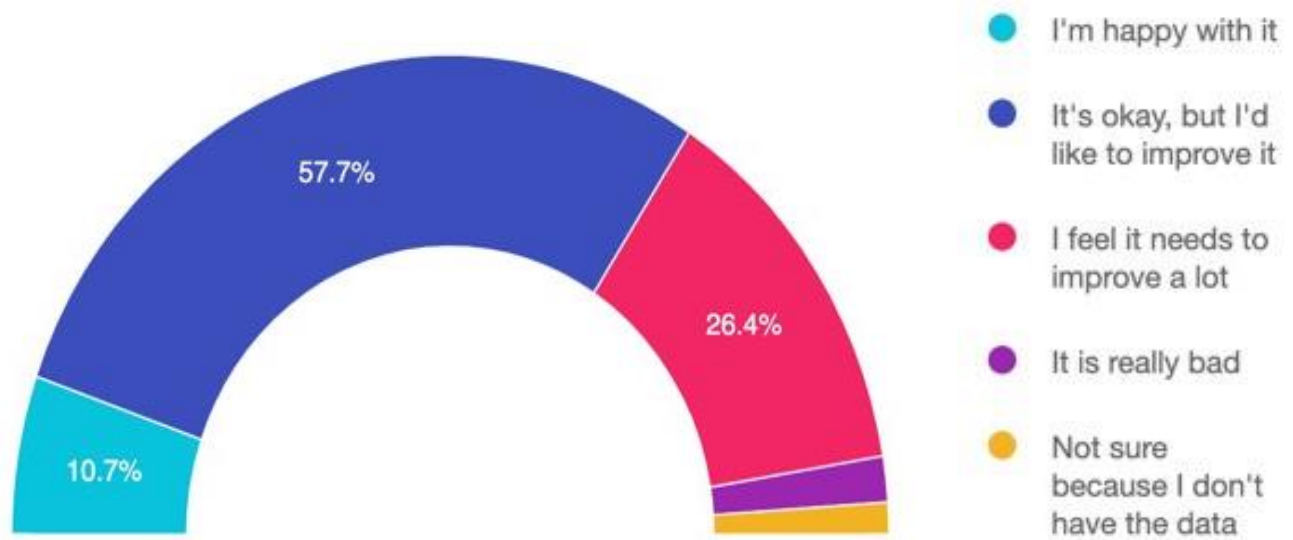
VOLUNTEER OUTCOMES

Progress To Goals

How Respondents Rank Themselves In Regard to Goals

To better understand volunteer managers perceptions about their organization's success when it comes to volunteer engagement, we asked - In general, how do you feel about your organization's progress toward your volunteer goals?

Over half (57.7%) noted that "it's OK, but I would like to improve it" and one in four (26.4% indicated "I feel it needs to improve a lot." Only one in ten (10.7%) noted "I'm happy with it."

The mean (or average) of all responses was 2.2 (OK, But Would Like to Improve)

Organization's Progress toward Volunteer Goals

Legend:
- ● I'm happy with it
- ● It's okay, but I'd like to improve it
- ● I feel it needs to improve a lot
- ● It is really bad
- ● Not sure because I don't have the data

Chart values: 57.7%, 26.4%, 10.7%

Progress & Volunteer Capacity
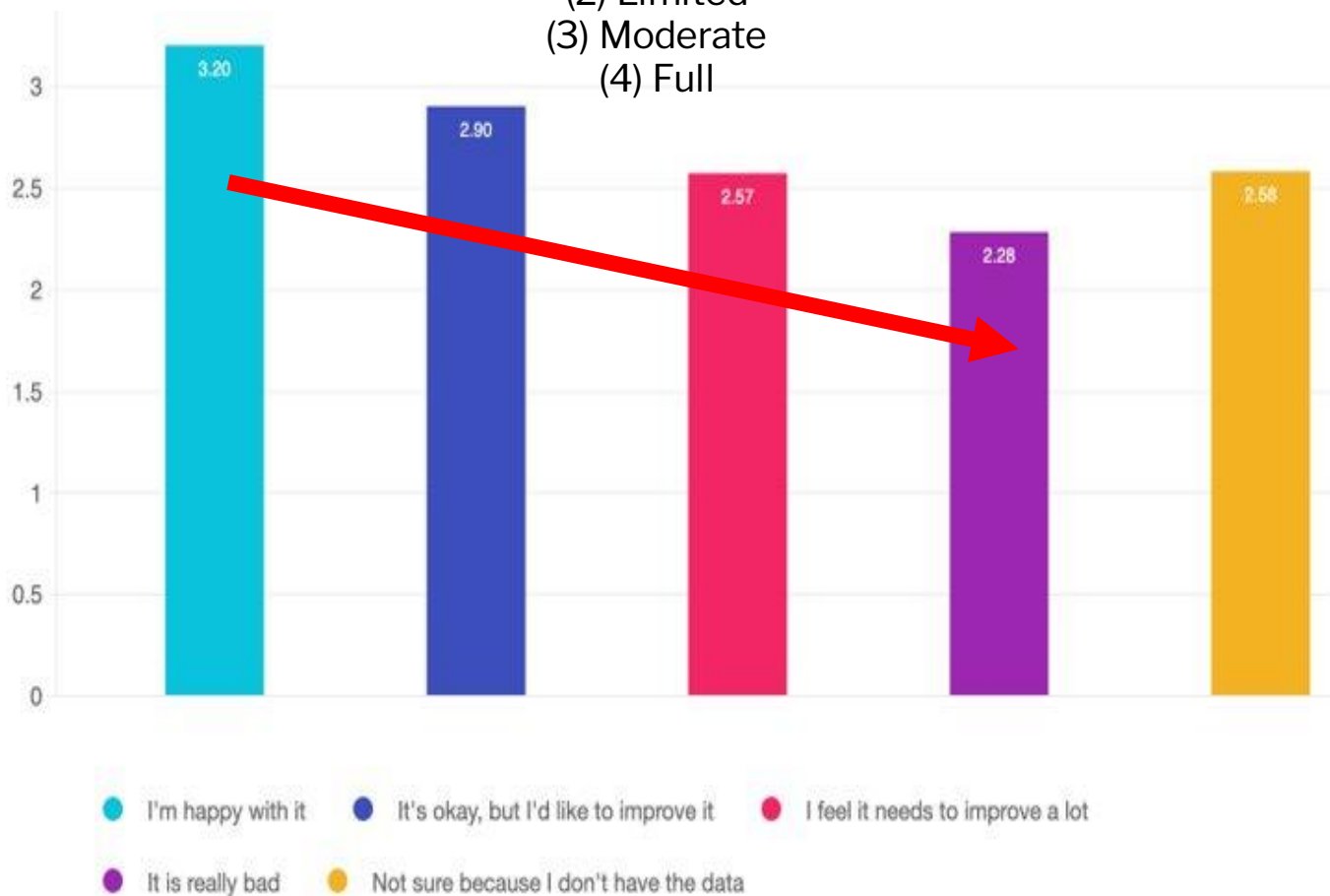
Volunteer Manager Perceptions Align

Similarly volunteer managers perception of performance appeared to correlate with their rating of volunteer capacity at their organization. In other words, their self perceptions of performance are aligned across two similar metrics.

Those who were happy with their performance were also more likely skew toward a positive rating of their current volunteer capacity (or extent to which volunteer roles are filled).

Progress x Capacity Rating

Weighted Value for Current Volunteer Capacity:
(1) None
(2) Limited
(3) Moderate
(4) Full

- ● I'm happy with it
- ● It's okay, but I'd like to improve it
- ● I feel it needs to improve a lot
- ● It is really bad
- ● Not sure because I don't have the data

Impact of COVID
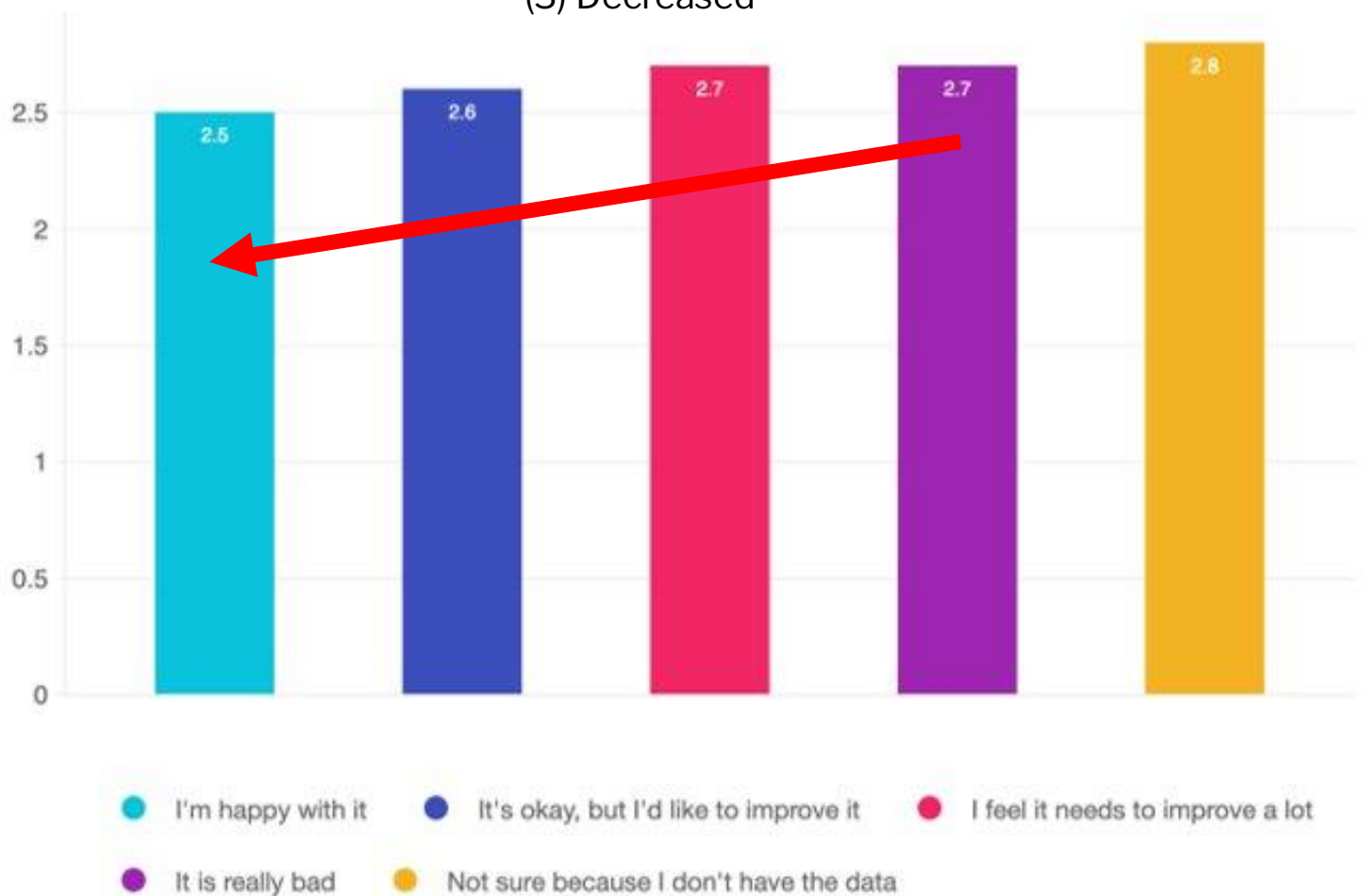
How COVID Impacts Volunteer Managers' Perceptions

Volunteer managers perception of performance appeared to correlate with the impact of COVID on the number of active volunteers.

Those who were happy with their performance were more likely skew toward a positive impact (or increase in volunteers).

Progress x Impact of COVID

Weighted Value for Impact of COVID on Volunteers:
(1) Increased
(2) Stayed the Same
(3) Decreased

Legend:
- I'm happy with it
- It's okay, but I'd like to improve it
- I feel it needs to improve a lot
- It is really bad
- Not sure because I don't have the data

Bars: 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.7, 2.8

Tracking Volunteer Impact

How Do Respondents Measure Volunteer Impact?

To assess other ways organizations are tracking volunteer outputs, outcomes, and impact, we asked - How do you currently track & report volunteer impact? (choose as many as apply).

The three most common ways were by tracking the total number of people served or reached by volunteers (47.0%), the average dollar volunteer of volunteer time (43.4%), and outcomes metrics specific to the programs where volunteers serve (39.5%), and satisfaction or Net Promoter Score of those served by volunteers (25.3%).

Note: some respondents chose Other and included more than one response, and some listed a response that aligned with an existing option. Where possible, we added these counts to the existing list of closed-ended options. In addition, we added two categories – Volunteer hours/number of Volunteers and Testimonials/Stories. Below is the full breakdown.

Volunteer Output/Outcome/Impact	Response %	Response #
Number of people reached or served by volunteers	47.0%	588
Average dollar value of total volunteer hours	43.4%	542
Outcome metrics specific to the programs where vols serve	39.5%	494
Satisfaction ratings of people served by volunteers	25.3%	316
Wage replacement equivalents for each volunteer role	18.5%	231
Dollar value of volunteers' financial contributions	15.6%	195
Total financial contributions raised by volunteers	10.7%	134
Return on Investment (ROI) calculation	9.5%	119
Volunteer hours/Number of volunteers	4.2%	52
Balanced Scorecard	2.7%	34
Progress toward UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	1.6%	20
Testimonials and stories from volunteers and beneficiaries	.9%	11
Other (Please specify)	1.8%	23
None of the above	15.6%	195

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Volunteer Outcome Metrics

What Volunteer Outcomes Are Respondents Currently Tracking and What Are Their Results?

To determine the extent to which organizations are tracking volunteer outcomes metrics, as well as explore what those outcomes might be for benchmarking purposes, we asked a series of two-step questions.

First when asked whether the metric was tracked and then, if the answer was "Yes" we then asked respondents to share their average results for that metric.

Note: Because such a small percentage of organizations track outcomes metrics (less than one-third track any given metric), the total response numbers for each benchmark was relatively low. As such, we cannot assume that the averages apply across the board.

Results of Four Key Volunteer Outcome Metrics

New Volunteer Conversion Rate

% who begin service after initiating contact

- Yes – 25.7% (N=319)
- Mean (or average) – 41-50%

Annual Volunteer Retention Rate

% who are still active 12 months later

- Yes – 31.9% (N=381)
- Mean (or average) – 51-60%

Annual Event Participation Rate

% who sign up for event shifts up & show up

- Yes – 38.0% (N=477)
- Mean (or average) – 61-70%

Monthly Churn Rate

% who who become inactive each month

- Yes – 15.4% (N=189)
- Mean (or average) – < 5%

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New Volunteer Conversions
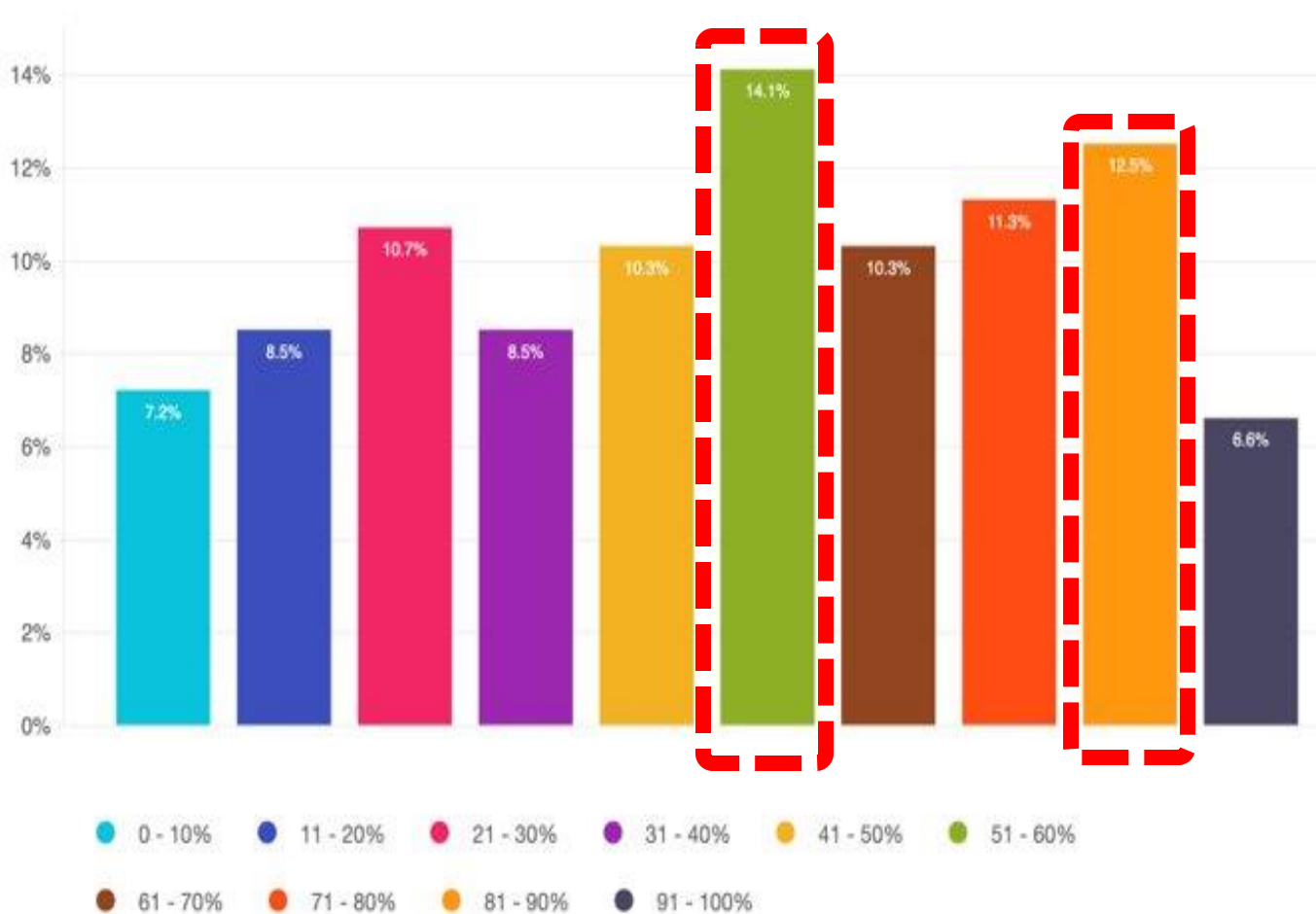
How Many New Recruits Begin Active Service?

New Volunteer Conversion Rate - the percentage of people who begin active service after they initiate contact.

One in four (25.7%) track this metric.

New Volunteer Conversion Rate

Mean: 5.7
(41-50% New Volunteer Conversion Rate)

Legend:
- 0 - 10%
- 11 - 20%
- 21 - 30%
- 31 - 40%
- 41 - 50%
- 51 - 60%
- 61 - 70%
- 71 - 80%
- 81 - 90%
- 91 - 100%

Bar values: 7.2%, 8.5%, 10.7%, 8.5%, 10.3%, 14.1%, 10.3%, 11.3%, 12.5%, 6.6%

Volunteer Pro

Annual Volunteer Retention

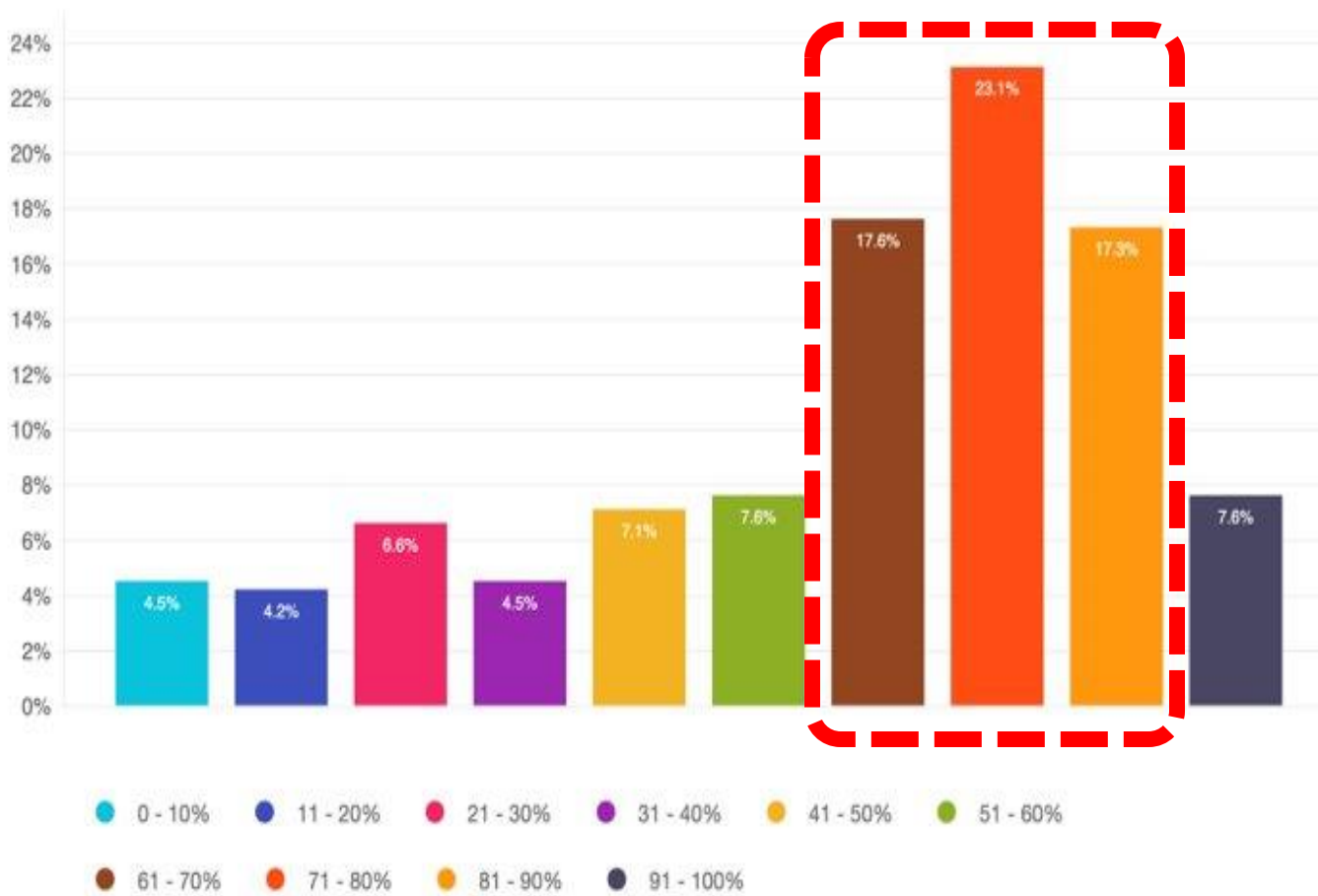## How Many Volunteers Are Still Serving A Year Later?

Annual Volunteer Retention Rate - the percentage of currently active volunteers who were active 12 months ago.

Roughly one-third (31.9%) track this metric.

Annual Volunteer Retention Rate

Mean: 6.7
(51-60% Annual Active Volunteer Retention Rate)

Legend:
- 0 - 10%
- 11 - 20%
- 21 - 30%
- 31 - 40%
- 41 - 50%
- 51 - 60%
- 61 - 70%
- 71 - 80%
- 81 - 90%
- 91 - 100%

Bar values: 4.5%, 4.2%, 6.6%, 4.5%, 7.1%, 7.6%, 17.6%, 23.1%, 17.3%, 7.6%
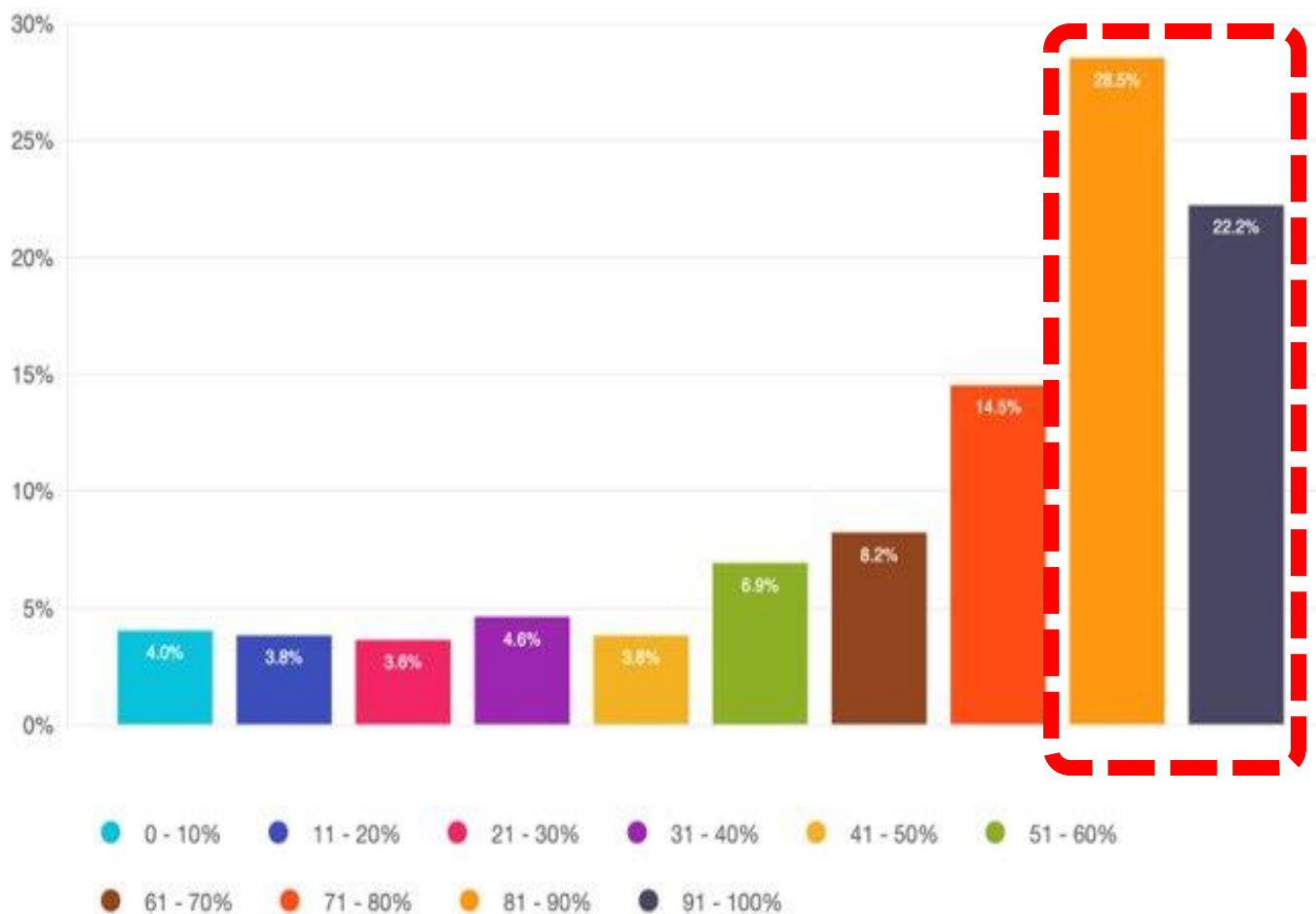
Event Participation Rates

How Many Volunteers Are Still Serving A Year Later?

Volunteer Event Participation Rate - the percentage of people who sign up actually show up.

Nearly one in five (38.0%) track this metric.

Volunteer Event Participation Rate

Mean: 7.5
(61-70% Event Participation Rate)

Legend:
- 0 - 10% : 4.0%
- 11 - 20% : 3.8%
- 21 - 30% : 3.6%
- 31 - 40% : 4.6%
- 41 - 50% : 3.8%
- 51 - 60% : 6.9%
- 61 - 70% : 8.2%
- 71 - 80% : 14.5%
- 81 - 90% : 28.5%
- 91 - 100% : 22.2%

Monthly Churn Rates

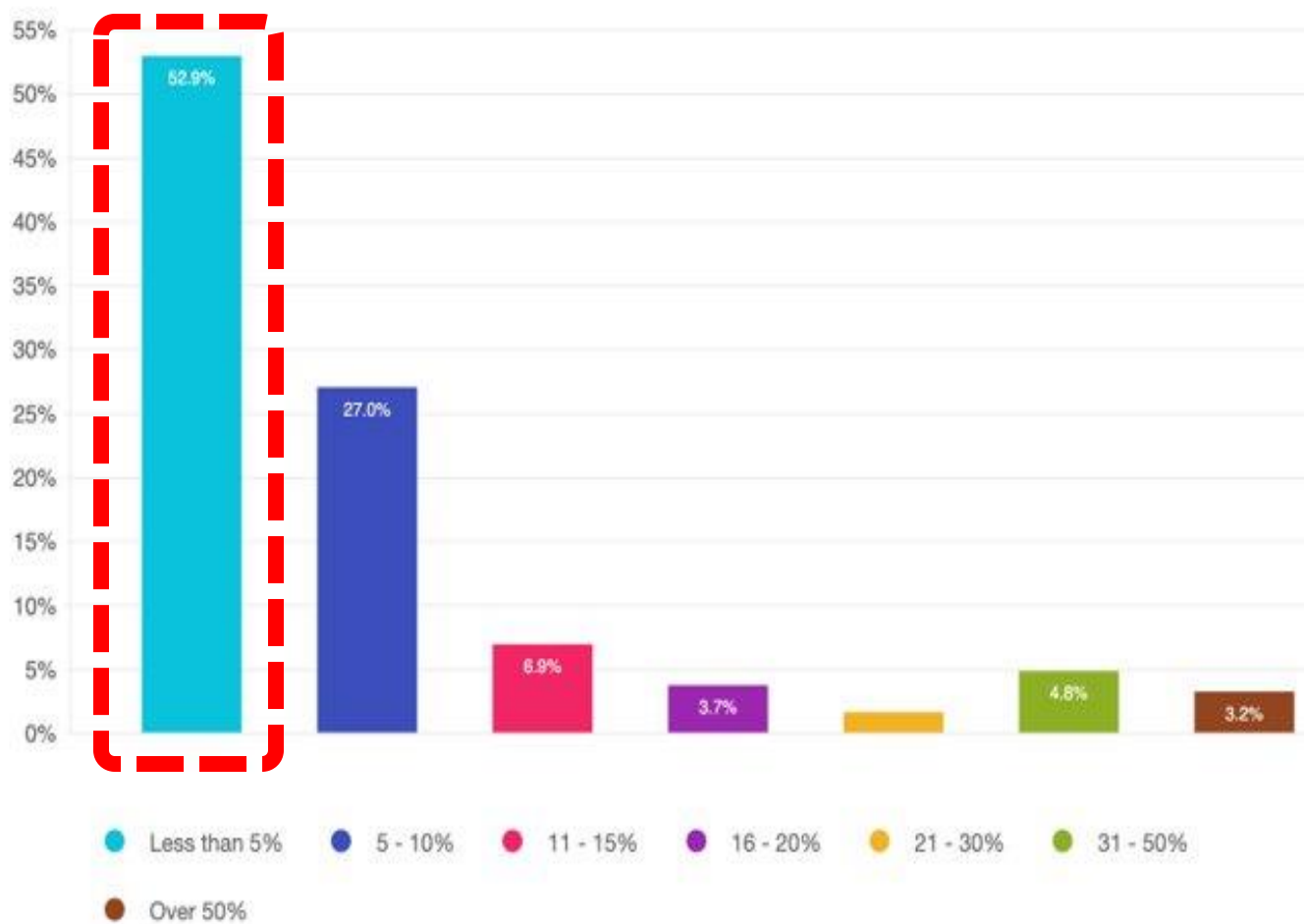## How Many Volunteers Are Still Serving A Year Later?

Volunteer Event Participation Rate - the percentage of volunteers from your entire team who become inactive each month.

A relatively small percentage of organizations (15.4%) reported that they tracked this metric.

Note: Chun rates could appear artificially low if the organization does not have an active policy and standard process in place for what defines an "active" volunteer and when volunteers are to no longer to be counted as active (and that this process is followed consistently).

Monthly Volunteer Churn Rate

Mean: 2.0
(5-10% Monthly Churn Rate)

Legend:
- Less than 5%
- 5 - 10%
- 11 - 15%
- 16 - 20%
- 21 - 30%
- 31 - 50%
- Over 50%

Values shown on chart: 52.9%, 27.0%, 6.9%, 3.7%, 4.8%, 3.2%

Time Spent: Monthly Churn

More Time Spent Correlates With Higher Participation Rates

Monthly volunteer churn rates were also associated with time devoted to volunteer management. The higher percentage of time spent on volunteer administration, the lower the monthly churn rate.

The majority of respondents do not track this rate, so the sample size for this analysis was small.
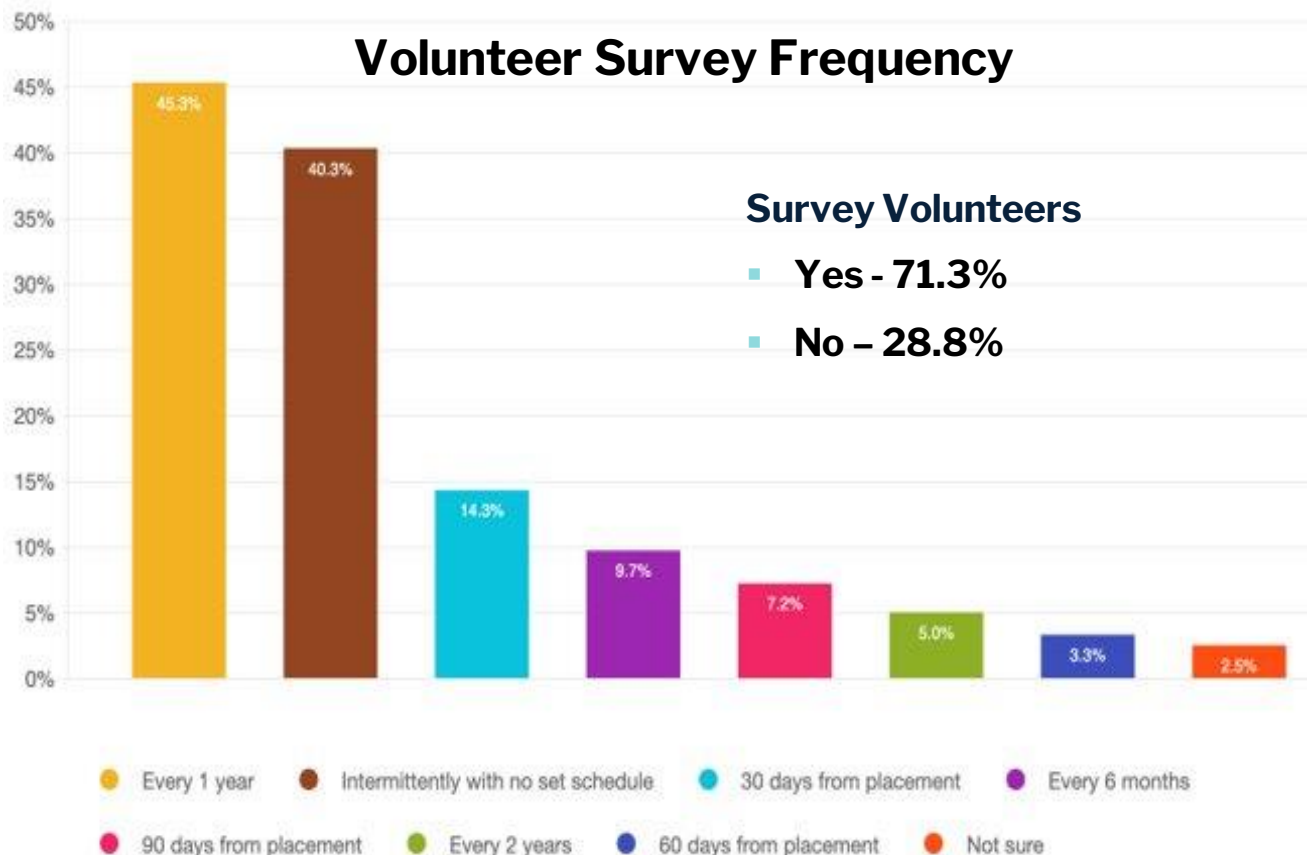
Time Spent x Monthly Volunteer Churn

Legend:
- Less than 5%
- 5 - 10%
- 11 - 15%
- 16 - 20%
- 21 - 30%
- 31 - 50%
- Over 50%

Volunteer Feedback Surveys

How Often Are Respondents Asking Volunteers for Feedback?

We asked - Do you SURVEY VOLUNTEERS to gather feedback on their experience? The vast majority (71.3%) reported conducting regular volunteer feedback surveys.

If they responded "Yes," we then asked - How often do you regularly SURVEY VOLUNTEERS? (choose as many as apply)

For those that reported using surveys to collect volunteer feedback, below is breakdown of volunteer survey frequency:

- 30 days from placement - 14.4%
- 60 days from placement - 3.3%
- 90 days from placement - 7.2%
- Every 6 months - 9.8%
- Every 1 year - 45.4%
- Every 2 years - 5.0%
- Intermittently - 40.3%
- Not sure - 2.5%

Volunteer Survey Frequency

Survey Volunteers
- **Yes - 71.3%**
- **No – 28.8%**

Legend: Every 1 year | Intermittently with no set schedule | 30 days from placement | Every 6 months | 90 days from placement | Every 2 years | 60 days from placement | Not sure

The Power of Feedback

## Collecting Volunteer Feedback Correlates With Better Outcomes Across the Board

In addition, volunteer managers positive perception of performance also correlated with whether or not they collected feedback from volunteers. Those who surveyed volunteers were more likely to be happy with their organization's performance.

There were similar results with volunteer managers who tracked new volunteer conversion rates, annual retention rates, volunteer event participation rates, and monthly volunteer churn rates.
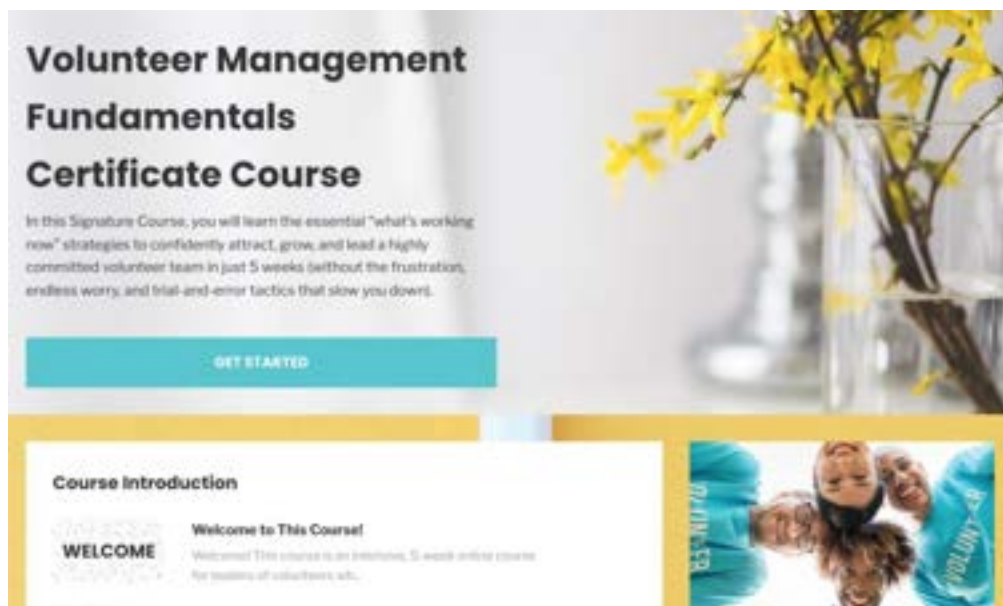
In other words, volunteer mangers who collected and tracked volunteer outcome data were more likely to rate their organization's performance with volunteer engagement as positive.

Progress x Volunteer Survey
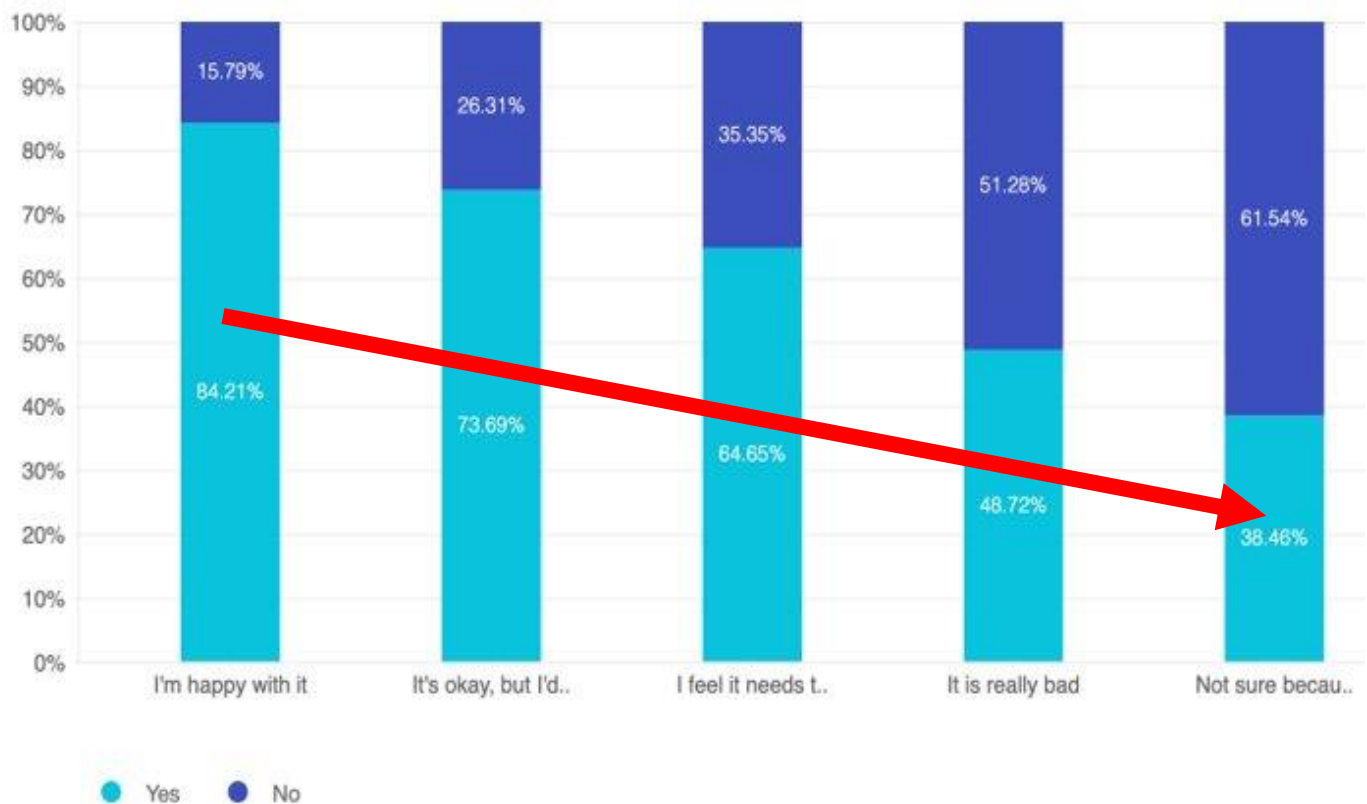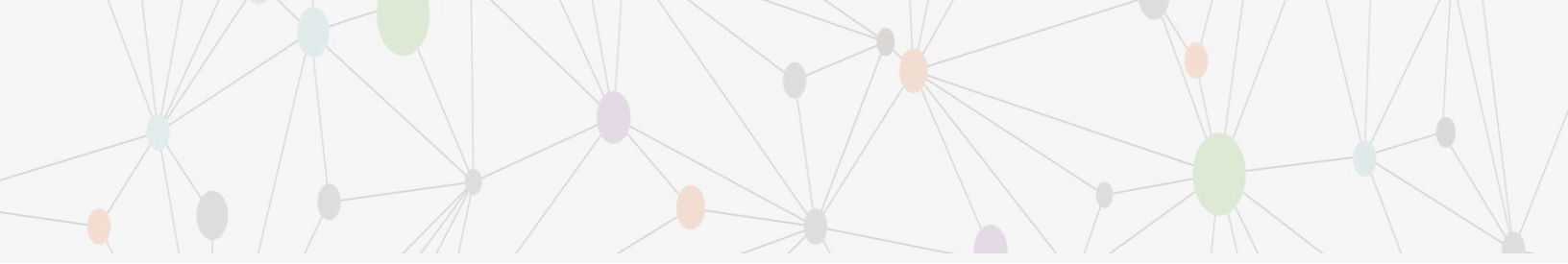
Build, Grow, Scale Involvement

In this **volunteer management certificate course**, you will learn the essential "what's working now" strategies to confidently attract, grow, and lead a highly committed volunteer team in just 5 weeks (without the frustration, endless worry, and trial-and-error tactics that slow you down).

What's Inside …
- Weekly on-demand lessons to watch at your own pace
- Live Q&A group coaching sessions to get answers & advice directly
- Lesson slides, worksheets, checklists, swipe files, & guides to convert learning into action
- Comment sections in each lesson to post questions & get quick answers directly from the instructor
- An automatic confirmation of completion once coursework is complete
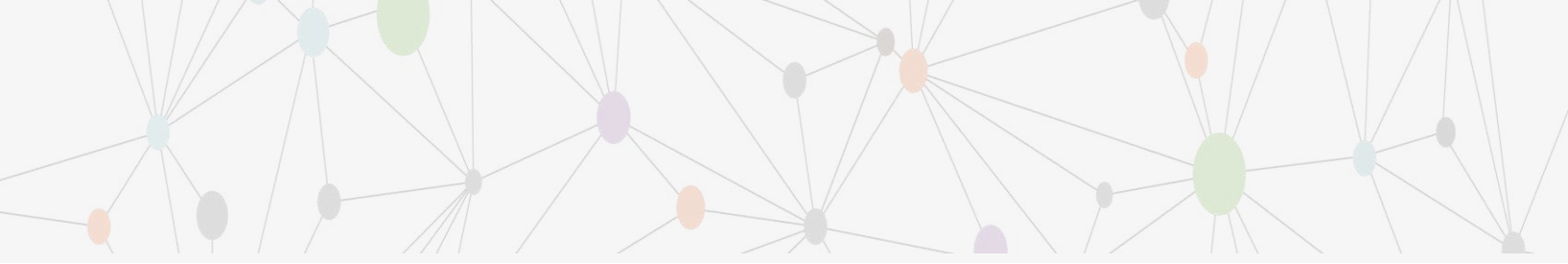- LIFETIME access to the course, & all future updates, for as long as it exists

PLUS, these Bonuses …
- *Bonus #1:* Balancing Episodic & Long-term Volunteers Spotlight Course (a $99 value)
- *Bonus #2:* 50% OFF for **VolunteerPro Premium Community Members** (a $198 value)

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GOT QUESTIONS?
Reach out to us at wecare@volpro.net. We'd be happy to assist.

2023 VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT

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