

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS VOLUNTEER CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY

PUBLIC REPORT, NOVEMBER 2025



Prepared by Center for Audience Research and Evaluation



research@crystalbridges.org



THE
MOMENTARY

1

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a rapidly growing region, **Northwest Arkansas has residents who want to serve, but not the systems to connect them to meaningful volunteer roles.** A regional volunteer center that pools resources from local organizations and advocates for volunteerism can close that gap, helping nonprofits use volunteers more effectively and strengthening a culture of service in Northwest Arkansas.

THE PROBLEM

Across the country, organizations face what Points of Light, an international nonprofit organization, calls the **“cycle of underinvestment in volunteering.”**¹ Nonprofits depend on volunteers to achieve their missions, yet often lack the time, tools, and funding to recruit, train, manage, and retain them effectively. Without the systems to track the full costs and benefits of volunteer engagement, funders often struggle to understand the kinds of investments that would unlock greater impact.

In Northwest Arkansas, this persistent underinvestment means that **organizations can’t fully harness the region’s growing volunteer potential.** Volunteer opportunities go unfilled even as residents, including newcomers, express a strong desire to get involved. As the region grows, fostering connection, belonging, and shared purpose through volunteering has never been more important.

KEY FINDINGS

The Center for Audience Research & Evaluation (CARE) conducted a six-month feasibility study to better understand these challenges and opportunities. The study found:

- P.15 1. Operational barriers limit volunteer impact.** Regional nonprofits rely on volunteers to achieve their missions, but face consistent challenges in recruitment, training, and management that limit impact.
- P.20 2. Positive net benefits, limited investment.** Volunteers contribute significant value, but limited investment into volunteer engagement prevents organizations from using them to their full potential.
- P.26 3. Multiple motivations matter.** Residents are most likely to volunteer when opportunities align with their values, skills, and schedules, and when they foster a sense of community connection.
- P.31 4. Strong support for a volunteer center.** Stakeholders across NWA see promise in a volunteer center that bridges the gap between community willingness to serve and organizational capacity.

¹ [*Points of Light, 2025.*](#)

THE OPPORTUNITY

A regional volunteer center would be more than a tech platform, it would serve as a **unified system for volunteerism and shared investment** across Northwest Arkansas, addressing shared challenges and creating collective impact:

By...	A regional volunteer center could...
Centralizing volunteer recruitment so residents can easily find opportunities and nonprofits can reach more volunteers	Increase the number of filled volunteer roles and better match volunteers to meaningful opportunities
Providing shared infrastructure like onboarding templates, training, background-check coordination	Reduce administrative burden on individual organizations, increasing their capacity to engage volunteers and scale their impact
Collecting and sharing standardized data on volunteer costs, placements, and outcomes	Help organizations make stronger, data-driven cases to funders, leading to sustainable investments
Coordinating volunteer efforts around regional priorities and shared initiatives	Strengthen social connection while reducing duplication of effort, building collective awareness and capacity to address NWA’s most pressing issues

For more details on how these opportunity areas map to existing volunteer centers, see [Volunteer Center Models](#).

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

Northwest Arkansas is at an inflection point. **With coordinated investment, local organizations can convert resident willingness to serve into lasting capacity**—helping nonprofits thrive, strengthening networks across NWA, and building a culture of service that grows along with the region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the Center for Audience Research & Evaluation at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, research and analysis for this study was led by Bryn Pernot, with project management by Liya Wizevich, and Juli Goss serving as advisor. Assistance was provided by Marissa Spear, Rachel Lindsey, and Meg Hasler.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the field-wide environmental scan, literature review, and primary data collected over the course of this study, we found that in order for a regional volunteer center to successfully support nonprofits and service organizations in building their capacity to engage and manage volunteers, it should follow these **guiding principles**:

01

Tailored Matching & Unified Intake

Be a visible, trusted entry point that matches people to volunteer roles by skills, availability, and interests – converting intent into action and reducing duplication of efforts between organizations.

02

Capacity & Compliance Support

Offer shared training, templates, and tools that reduce management challenges and strengthen the systems that make volunteer engagement sustainable across organizations.

03

Equity & Access by Design

Ensure volunteer opportunities are accessible through multilingual outreach, ADA-aware options, flexible scheduling, and family-friendly roles so everyone can participate.

04

Sustain & Scale

Launch intentionally, measure what matters, and build on learnings to strengthen regional coordination, optimize services, and expand collective capacity over time.

Introduction

- Project Background
- Definitions
- Methodology & Timeline
- Sample

PROJECT BACKGROUND

 *Nonprofits are not only responsible for themselves and their volunteers; they are **responsible for the whole organizational community**, which seeks to retain, expand, and renew volunteer resources.” - Volunteer Engageability: A Conceptual Framework²*

Northwest Arkansas (NWA) is the fastest-growing region in the state, with its population on track to expand from 600,000 to one million people over the next 25 years.³ Between 2022 and 2023, 28% of Arkansas residents formally volunteered through organizations, contributing an estimated \$922.2 million in service hours to charities and nonprofits.⁴ Another 52% of Arkansans spent time informally helping their neighbors.⁴ While NWA is experiencing transformative change and is rich in generosity, civic spirit, and community pride, the region lacks a clear understanding of how volunteerism currently functions and how it might be scaled to meet both rising community needs and the growing desire for meaningful connection.

Many nonprofit and service organizations rely on volunteers to extend their reach and impact but there is no coordinated, data-informed approach to understanding how service opportunities are being used, who is being engaged, or where the system is falling short. As a result, **individual and institutional efforts to strengthen the culture of service in NWA remain fragmented, and the potential for volunteerism to build a more connected, inclusive, and resilient region goes unrealized.**

In partnership with the Jones Center and the Walmart Foundation, the Center for Audience Research & Evaluation (CARE), based at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, conducted a six-month feasibility study to address these gaps. This study provided a timely opportunity to **explore how a volunteer center might strengthen area nonprofits, create connections across sectors, and foster social and intergenerational connectedness** among long-time and new residents.

Through the research process, we 1) examined the scope of current volunteer opportunities, 2) assessed the capacity, challenges, and aspirations of organizations that host volunteers, and 3) identified the motivations, barriers, and preferences of individuals who are willing to serve. **Wherever possible, we integrated literature and primary data to point to how NWA compares to established benchmarks.**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How are regional nonprofit organizations **currently engaging volunteers** and what **challenges** do they face in managing them?
2. What **motivates or discourages residents** from volunteering, and what helps them feel welcomed and effective?
3. What support do nonprofits need to **expand or enhance** their use of volunteers?
4. Where do **gaps exist in volunteer engagement** and what opportunities exist to bridge these gaps?
5. What role can **anchor institutions**, such as schools, faith communities, health care institutions, and employers, play in strengthening a culture of service?

² Brudney & Meijs (2009) in [Arnon et al., 2023](#).

³ [Northwest Arkansas Council, 2025](#).

⁴ [AmeriCorps, 2024a](#).

DEFINITIONS

The definitions on the following pages are meant to provide background details on how key terms are used in the field of volunteer studies and how we're using them in this report.

VOLUNTEERS & VOLUNTEERISM

A volunteer is any person who works on a regular, short-term, or occasional basis to provide services to the organization or to the people the organization serves but is not a paid staff member or a consultant.⁵

Volunteering plays an important role in creating vibrant, welcoming, and connected neighborhoods, sectors, and residents. On a community level, volunteering supports democracy and collective well-being and encourages local solutions to local problems, "promoting local democratic renewal and delivering support to those in need."⁶ Volunteering can have a positive impact on the individual volunteer as well: increasing physical and psychological well-being, creating a wider social network, reducing loneliness, and more.⁷

While many kinds of people volunteer, they are typically individuals with higher income, higher education, and are often white.⁸ Women and parents of children under 18 are more likely to volunteer because "jobs and careers limit discretionary time, but family obligations draw people into volunteering."⁹ Teenagers and young adults are far more likely to volunteer than those older than them, except elderly adults, due to the spread of internships and high school graduation requirements.¹⁰

FORMAL VOLUNTEERING

Formal volunteering involves helping others by working with organizations through activities like supporting public health efforts, assisting food banks, and tutoring students to help them stay on track in school.¹¹ This can range from short-term, one-off tasks to long-term commitments requiring significant skills.

Volunteering can be:¹²

- **General vs. Specialized:** Roles that require specific skills (e.g., financial advising) versus more general tasks (e.g., food distribution).
- **One-Time vs. Consistent:** Episodic opportunities (e.g., annual events) versus ongoing commitments (e.g., weekly tutoring).
- **Internal vs. Client-Facing:** Supporting organizational operations versus directly engaging with beneficiaries.

⁵ *Hager & Brudney, 2021.*

⁶ *Williams, 2003, p. 65.*

⁷ *Chambre, 2020; Handy et al., 2014; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2010; LeRoux, 2007; Ohmer, 2008; Putnam, 2001; Small & McDermott, 2006; Stoll, 2001; Williams, 2003.*

⁸ *Haski-Leventhal et al., 2010.*

⁹ *Chambre (2020), p. 392.*

¹⁰ *Ibid., p. 395.*

¹¹ *AmeriCorps, 2024a.*

¹² *Points of Light, 2025.*

INFORMAL HELPING

Informal helping involves helping neighbors with tasks like house sitting, watching each other's children, or lending tools.¹³ There has been more research and thus more data on participation rates, funding, and social outcomes for formal volunteering than informal helping. There are relatively few studies of organizations like volunteer fire departments, ethnic organizations, and hometown societies that attract immigrants, people of color, and lower- and working-class people.¹⁴

Given that there are higher rates of informal volunteering among women, people of color, working-class communities, and other groups who are often discriminated against, this lack of research on informal helping can reproduce dominant narratives around volunteering and reinforce social inequalities.

Surveys of volunteerism may be less likely to capture informal activities "because people tend to forget them as ordinary bits of everyday life."¹⁵ Since research to date has failed to systematically include informal helping, most of this report focuses on formal volunteering, but where possible, we have included a more expansive definition of volunteering.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Volunteer management typically refers to organizational practices used to recruit and retain volunteers and can include different practices depending on whether volunteering is episodic or long-term.¹⁶

Volunteer management capacity is "the resources an organization dedicates to introducing and incorporating volunteers, including supplying a budget for the volunteer program, having one or more dedicated volunteer managers (and their characteristics and competencies), and providing paid staff time and capability to supervise volunteers."¹⁷

VOLUNTEER CENTERS

Volunteer centers are community organizations designed to "stimulate and coordinate local voluntary action."¹⁸ They support community engagement through a range of activities, such as offering databases of volunteer opportunities and available volunteers, facilitating board placement, advocating for volunteerism, and assisting with volunteer recruitment, screening and placement. They also provide consultation for organizations starting volunteer programs, training and technical assistance to volunteer coordinators, and research and dissemination of community data.¹⁹

A volunteer center can function as a standalone nonprofit or as part of a larger entity, such as the United Way, a community service organization, a university, or a government agency at the local, state, or national level.

¹³ [AmeriCorps, 2024a](#).

¹⁴ [Chambré, 2020](#); [Dean, 2021](#); [Points of Light, 2025](#).

¹⁵ [Dean, 2021](#).

¹⁶ [Spinney & Clinton, 2024](#).

¹⁷ [Nesbit et al., 2018](#), p. 13-14.

¹⁸ [Brudney \(2005\) in Brudney & Woodworth, 2014](#).

¹⁹ [Ibid.](#)

METHODOLOGY & TIMELINE

The feasibility study was structured as a layered and iterative approach to gathering data and gleaning insights into how to enhance regional organizations' volunteer engagement capacity. Each phase of data collection was followed by an analysis phase and a presentation of preliminary findings to stakeholders. This approach was intentional to facilitate continuous learning and for each phase to build on learnings from past data. The complete project timeline is visualized below.

MAY – JUNE 2025

Landscape Review & Environmental Scan to establish what the regional landscape for formal volunteering looks like compared to the national landscape. This involved reading through and synthesizing literature on volunteerism today, volunteer engagement best practices, and organizational and funder investment in volunteerism. **Findings from the literature informed instrument development for later phases. Established benchmarks were compared to regional data where possible throughout the report.**

JUNE – JULY 2025

Focus Groups with regional nonprofit organizations to gather rich qualitative data on how they are currently using volunteers, what challenges they face in volunteer engagement, and what kind of support they need to increase their capacity for volunteer management. We invited a mix of Jones Center affiliates and non-affiliates from a range of sectors and included a variety of organizational sizes.

We conducted **4** focus groups (2 virtual, 2 in-person at Jones Center locations) with **33** total participants. The full discussion guide can be found on page 43.

JULY – AUGUST 2025

Survey of regional nonprofit organizations to gather quantitative data on the roles that volunteers play, the top challenges and benefits of engaging volunteers, and what support would help organizations better use volunteers.

These questions built on the data collected in the focus groups and were directly informed by literature on volunteer investment and volunteer management best practices.

We gathered **76** surveys from respondents at **56** different organizations, including Jones Center affiliates and non-affiliates. In addition to surveying the focus group participants, we shared the survey widely and encouraged respondents to send it to others in their network. The full survey can be found on page 46.

AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 2025

Survey of area residents to gather details on what kind of volunteer opportunities they're looking for, how volunteering fits into their lives, and what they need to feel welcome and effective when volunteering.

We gathered **530** surveys from residents across Benton and Washington county. Respondents matched the typical volunteer profile, with the majority being older white women. We did see some diversity in the length of time that people have lived in NWA, employment status, and income. Respondents were recruited via nonprofits that had participated in the focus group and surveys, the Crystal Bridges volunteer listserv, and posts in NWA Daily and Axios. The full survey can be found on page 57.

OCTOBER 2025

Aggregate reporting synthesized data across all sources to provide evidence for answering the study's research questions.

NOVEMBER 2025

End of project wrap-up to discuss the aggregate report with stakeholders including Jones Center, Walmart Foundation, regional nonprofits, and area residents.

SAMPLE

Across three methods, our sample included participants who work at local nonprofit organizations and community members who volunteer in the region or want to volunteer. The nonprofit respondents included a mix of Jones Center affiliates and non-affiliates.

NWA NONPROFIT FOCUS GROUP

33 participants across **4** sessions

- Arkansas Children's Hospital
- Canopy NWA
- Down Syndrome Connection NWA
- Dress For Success NWA
- Economic Opportunity Agency of Washington County
- Family Network NWA
- Greater Works Ministries
- Habitat for Humanity NWA
- Latinas en Bici
- Mercy Hospital
- Northwest Arkansas Community College
- NWA Ballet Theatre
- NWA Land Trust
- NWA Regional Dance
- NWA Women's Shelter
- Peel Compton Foundation
- Perspectibility
- Ra-Ve Cultural Foundation
- Sheep Dog Impact Assistance
- Shiloh Museum of Ozark History
- Springdale Public Schools
- Teen Action and Support Center
- Theater Squared
- Town of Bentonville
- United Way NWA
- University of Arkansas
- Washington Regional Hospital

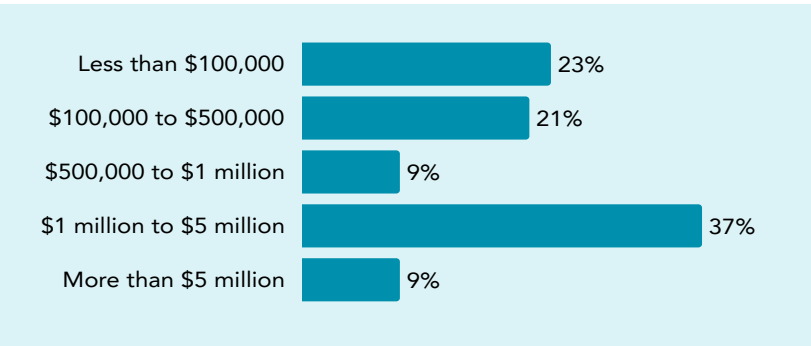
NWA NONPROFIT SURVEY

76 survey respondents from staff at 56 regional organizations

10% response rate Note: While multiple individuals responded from some organizations, duplicate entries were removed to ensure each nonprofit is represented only once in the data.

Annual Organizational Operating Budget

n=43



24% don't budget for volunteer involvement
n=51

28% aren't sure how much is allocated
n=51

Staff Size

n=50

50% have 1-10 full-time staff members

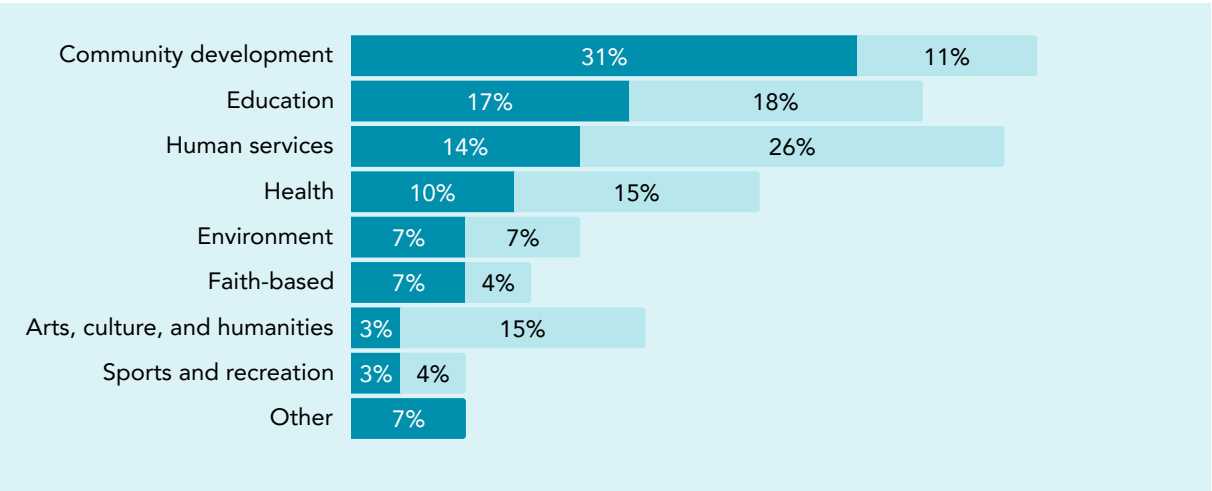
50% have 1-10 part-time staff members

2 organizations have more than 50 full-time staff members and more than 50 part-time staff members

Organizational Sector

n=56

● Jones Center Affiliate (n=29)
● Non-Affiliate (n=27)

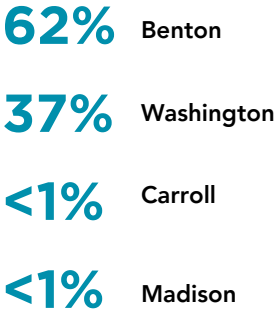


NWA RESIDENT SURVEY

530 survey responses from NWA residents

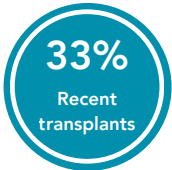
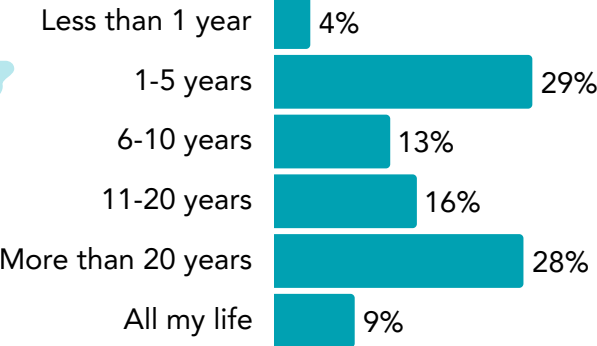
Location

n=412



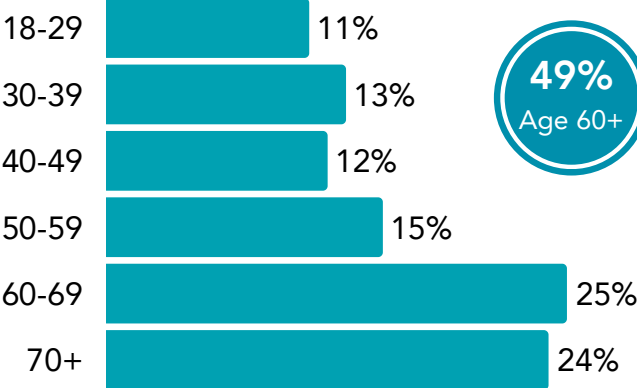
Length of Residence in NWA

n=434



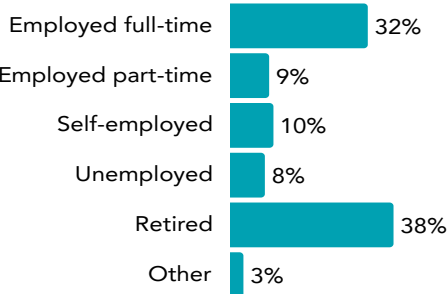
Age

n=381



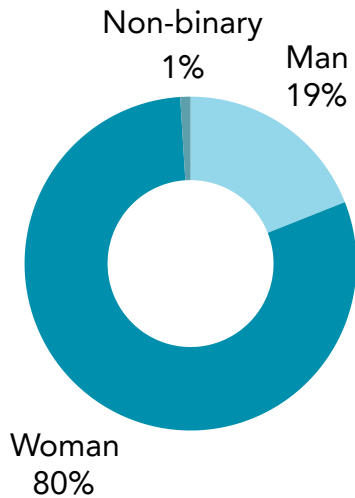
Employment Status

n=303



Gender

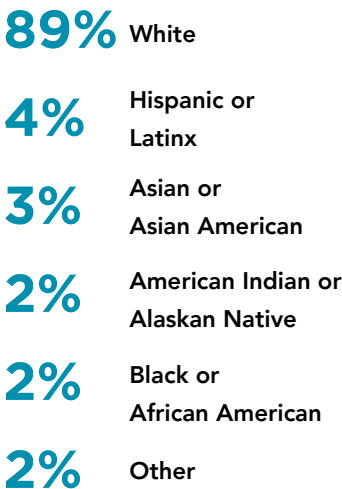
n=418



Race/Ethnicity

n=420

Check all that apply.



Parents / Guardians

n=422

16%

have children under 18 living in their household





Feasibility Study Findings

#1

OPERATIONAL BARRIERS LIMIT VOLUNTEER IMPACT

Regional nonprofits rely on volunteers to achieve their missions, but face consistent challenges in recruitment, training, and management that limit impact.

THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERISM

From the focus groups and surveys with regional organizations we saw that across NWA, **volunteers are mission enablers, helping nonprofits deliver more services, reach more residents, and deepen community connection and belonging.** Regional organizations use volunteers to deliver core programs, staff one-time and recurring events, extend outreach and education, and serve as community ambassadors. They are primarily involved in direct service (like mentoring, tutoring, and delivering meals) and indirect service (like environmental cleanup, event setup, and assisting with logistics) but they may also support internal and external administrative tasks. This aligns with literature from the field which reinforces the **community impact of volunteerism** and how it enables organizations to provide critical services like youth mentorship, disaster response, and food security at scale.²⁰

46%

n=48
NWA Nonprofit Survey

of NWA nonprofits said that volunteers are “absolutely essential” and that they could not fulfill their mission without them

79%

n=1,001
Nationwide Nonprofit Leaders Survey²¹

of nonprofit leaders in the US reported that volunteers allow their organizations to provide services they otherwise could not provide

At their best, volunteers:

- Extend organizational capacity
- Offer specialized skills (e.g., legal, marketing, tech) to organizations
- Increase awareness of:
 - Local issues
 - Impact organizations have on communities
 - Lived experiences of people receiving services

²⁰ [Points of Light, 2025.](#)

²¹ [Dietz & Grimm, 2023.](#)

VOLUNTEERISM IN NWA

Following Hager and Brudney's work on volunteering, we divided responding NWA organizations into four categories to describe their scope of volunteer use, which takes into account the number of volunteers that organizations engaged in the past year and the number of hours that volunteers collectively worked in a typical week.²²

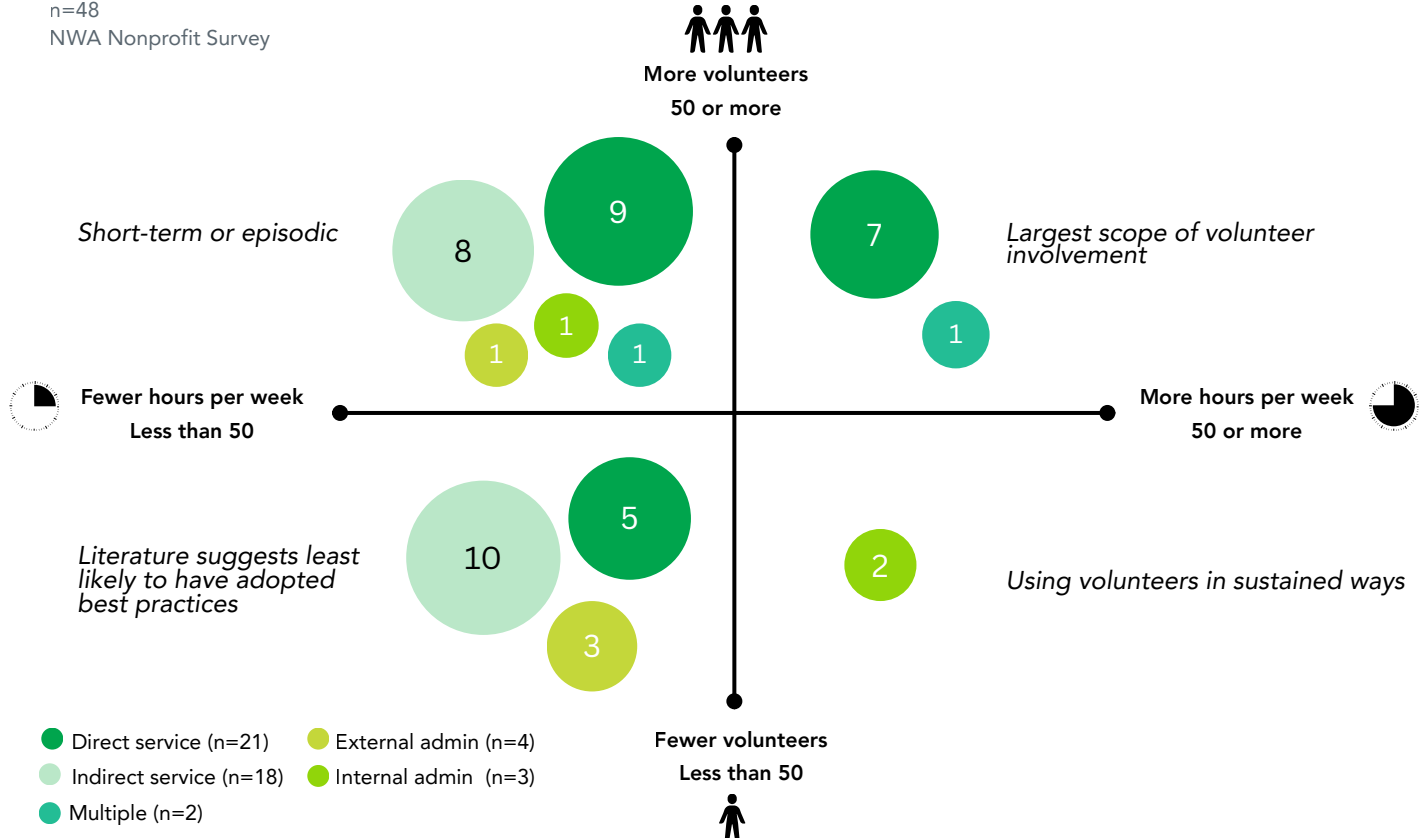
In their survey of over 2,000 nonprofits across the country, Hager and Brudney found that the group with **"few volunteers, few hours"** was the largest, but least likely to have adopted volunteer management best practices. **"Many volunteers, few hours"** includes organizations that typically engage volunteers in short-term or episodic assignments while **"few volunteers, many hours"** includes organizations that use volunteers in more sustained ways. **"Many volunteers, many hours"** represents organizations with the largest scope of volunteer involvement.²³

As illustrated below, regional organizations range in their scope of volunteer use and the tasks that volunteers typically perform. Regardless of the role they perform (direct service, indirect service, external admin, or internal admin), **volunteers tend to support NWA organizations in more short-term or episodic ways**. This speaks to the landscape of volunteer management as research has suggested that organizations that have a *smaller* scope of volunteer engagement tend to have adopted *fewer* management best practices (see [Finding 2](#)).

"What is the main role that volunteers perform at your organization" mapped against "scope of volunteer use" (number of volunteers + hours worked)

n=48

NWA Nonprofit Survey



²² Hager & Brudney, 2004.

²³ Ibid.

In addition to understanding the scope and extent of volunteer contributions in NWA, our focus groups with area nonprofits provided rich description of what volunteer support looks like in practice. Representative quotes and examples below illustrate the **wide range of ways volunteers contribute to regional organizations and allow them to achieve their mission.**

“Volunteers at [our organization] are essential to **expanding the organization’s capacity to serve youth through high-quality programming** such as mentoring, tutoring, coaching, and leading activities across academics, sports, the arts, and life skills.
– Community and Economic Development

“I want people to experience, to see that [refugees] are just normal people, who [have] lived under not normal circumstances, and now they’re trying to live under normal circumstances. For some, the people we serve are ‘aliens’, but volunteers see that they’re **normal people and connect with them and build lasting relationships.**
– Human Services

“Volunteers are the lifeblood of our [organization]. **Their dedication and compassion not only power our daily operations—they embody the very spirit of our mission to fight hunger and uplift our community.** From sorting donations to distributing food, volunteers handle essential logistics that keep the pantry running smoothly. Many volunteers become passionate ambassadors, sharing our mission and raising awareness about food insecurity in their circles.
– Human Services

Two **environment focused nonprofits** use corporate volunteers to manage landscapes and protect against invasive species.

A **local school** identifies service learning projects to connect students to their communities.

A **local hospital** appreciates how retired adults are using their decades of knowledge to serve their community. They encourage volunteers to seek out other opportunities to use their skills.

By volunteering at food pantries, students from **public high schools** build connections with neighbors and increase the number of people these organizations can serve.

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT BENEFITS

While close to half of the regional nonprofits surveyed felt that volunteers greatly increased the quality of services, provided services the organizations could otherwise not offer, and provided cost-savings to their organizations, **regional nonprofits seem to see less benefits from volunteers than national nonprofits**. The chart below presents data from the Do Good Institute on a national survey of nonprofits and funders alongside primary data collected for this study. In addition to differences based on geography (NWA vs. national), this chart also demonstrates the **large differences of opinion between nonprofit leaders and funders** on the benefits of volunteers.²⁴

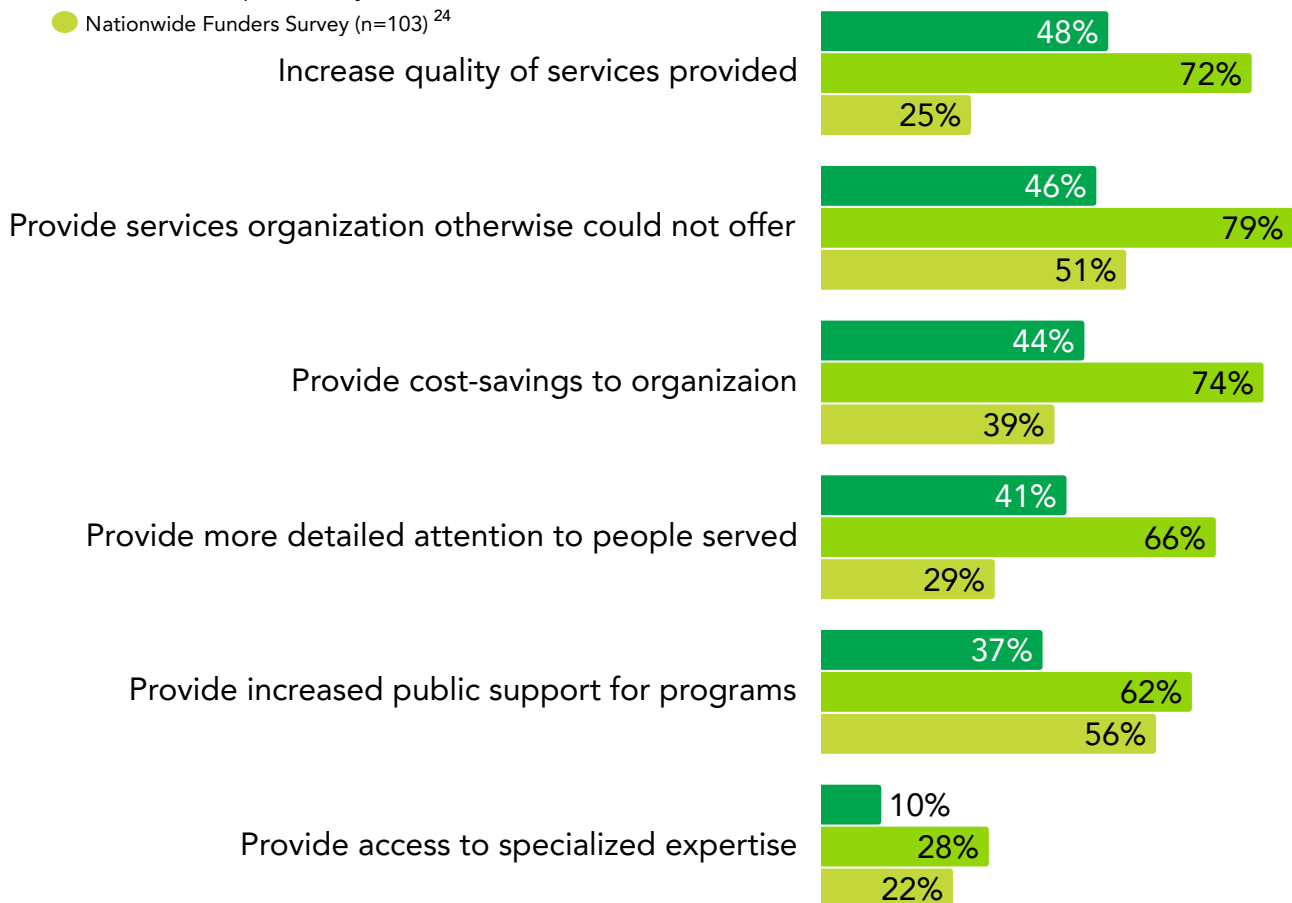
NWA nonprofits' responses lags behind national data on the benefits of volunteers.

Percentage of respondents saying that volunteers provide each listed benefit "to a great extent."

● NWA Nonprofit Survey (n=52)

● Nationwide Nonprofit Survey (n=1,210)²⁴

● Nationwide Funders Survey (n=103)²⁴



²⁴ [Dietz & Grimm, 2023.](#)

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT CHALLENGES

Volunteers extend and increase the quality of service, but a **lack of funding and paid staff time to train and supervise volunteers is a major issue** for many regional nonprofits. This **exacerbates challenges with recruitment**: finding enough volunteers with the right skills who are available at the right time. The literature also shows that nonprofit leaders consistently report that recruiting enough volunteers is a big problem.²⁵ While funders agree that recruiting volunteers with the right skills or expertise is an issue, they don't see recruiting in general as being as big an issue as other challenges like the lack of funds for supporting volunteer involvement. The chart below shows more details on the **differences of opinion between regional nonprofits, national nonprofits, and funders** when it comes to the issues of engaging volunteers.

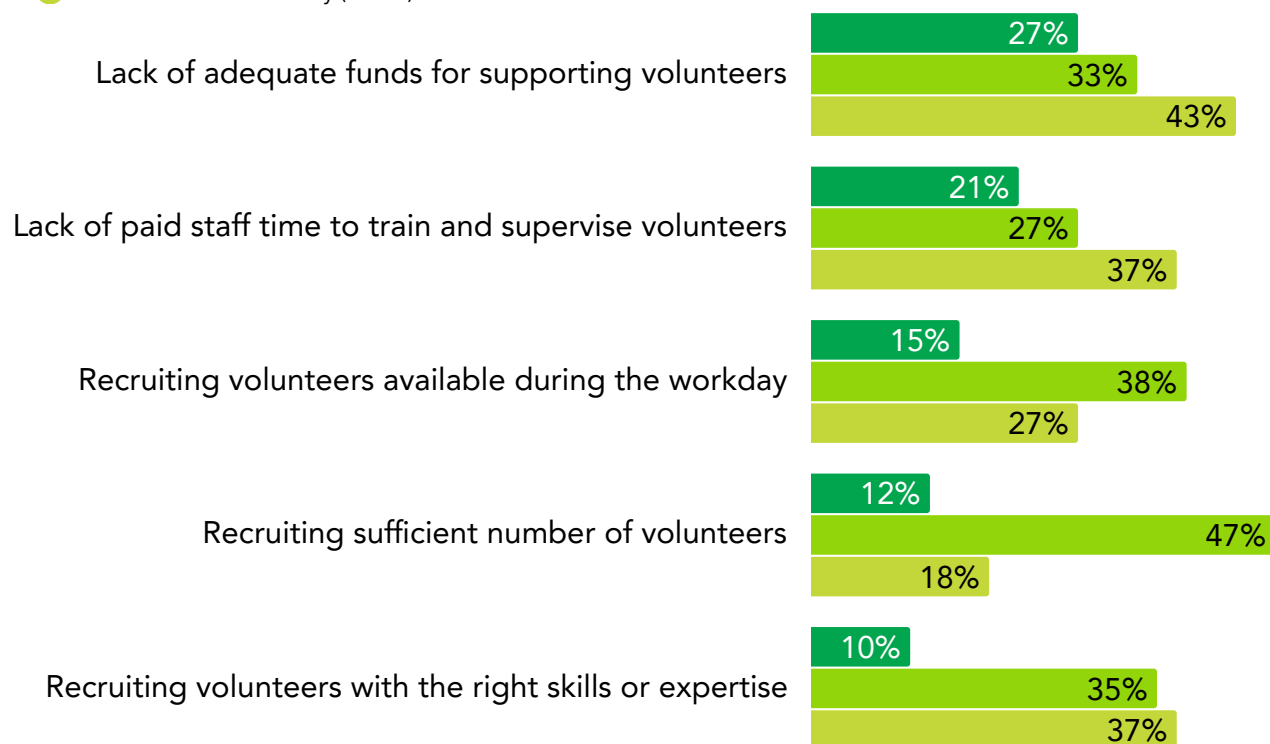
More than a quarter of regional nonprofits say that a lack of funds is a “big problem” in supporting volunteers. Limited staff time and recruitment challenges are also major issues.

Percentage of respondents saying that the listed issues are a “big problem” for their organization or the field.

● NWA Nonprofit Survey (n=52)

● Nationwide Nonprofit Survey (n=1,210)²⁵

● Nationwide Funders Survey (n=103)²⁵



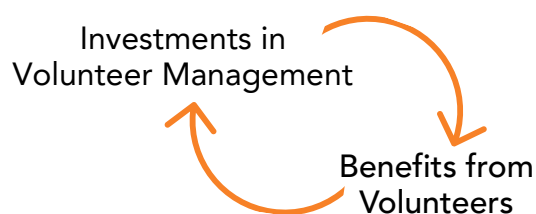
²⁵ *Ibid.*

#2

POSITIVE NET BENEFITS, LIMITED INVESTMENT

Volunteers provide positive “net benefits” but limited investment in volunteer engagement prevents organizations from utilizing them to their full potential.

THE NET BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERS



“The benefits that volunteers bring vary directly with how well-prepared the organization is to welcome and work with them...**The more you put in, the greater the return.**

– Hager & Brudney, 2021.²⁶

While regional nonprofits describe volunteers as critical to achieving their mission, investments in volunteer engagement lag behind this sentiment. In our study, nearly half of the organizations we heard from said that volunteers are “absolutely essential” to delivering their services. At the same time, nonprofit leaders mentioned limits on staff time, training, and infrastructure to recruit, onboard, supervise, and retain volunteers at the scale they need.

Consistent with these themes, relatively few organizations strongly agreed that they invest strategically in volunteer engagement. Only about 15% said it was *completely true* that they allocate adequate resources to support volunteers and about one in five reported having a strategic plan that includes volunteer engagement.

In contrast, organizations were more confident about how they engage volunteers directly. More than a third (39%) said it was *completely true* that they engage volunteers across all levels of the organization and roughly half (53%) reported that it’s *mostly or completely true* that they engage volunteers as part of efforts to cultivate long-term support, including potential future donors.

These results suggest that while nonprofits value volunteers and strive to create positive experiences, investments in the systems and capacity to sustain those efforts remain limited.

²⁶ [Hager & Brudney, 2021.](#)

As we consider the benefits and challenges of engaging volunteers, the literature offers a helpful tool for considering the balance between payoffs and problems: a “net benefits score.”²⁷

The net benefits score ranges from -16 (all challenges) to +16 (all benefits). **A typical score is between 6-7**, meaning that benefits generally outweigh the challenges.

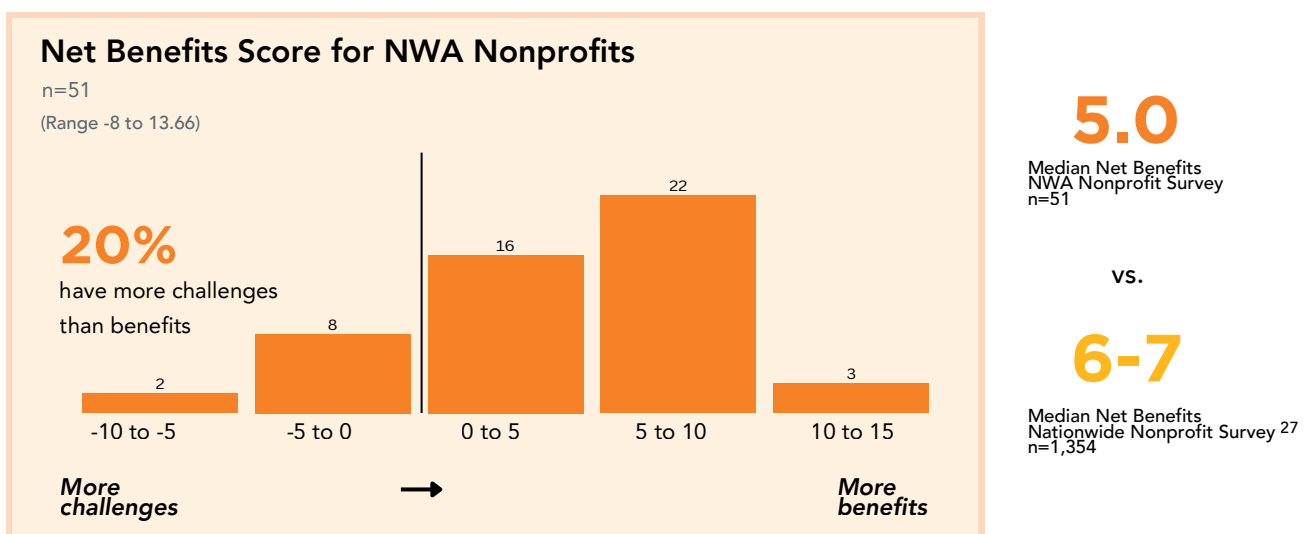
A negative score means that an organization faces more problems managing volunteers than they experience payoffs from their services.

*These benefits and challenges (and the net benefits score) do not pertain to volunteers per se, but to how organizations involve them. In other words, volunteers do not in and of themselves promise advantages or problems. Rather, **organizational preparation and management of volunteers is key to maximizing benefits** over challenges. We’ll share more about how investment in volunteerism affects the net benefits score in the following pages.*

$$\text{BENEFITS VOLUNTEERS PROVIDE} - \text{ISSUES MANAGING VOLUNTEERS} = \text{NET BENEFITS}$$

“Net benefits are highest when [organizations] get **maximum benefits** from volunteers **without the common problems** associated with low volunteer supply or low volunteer management capacity. – Hager & Brudney, 2004.

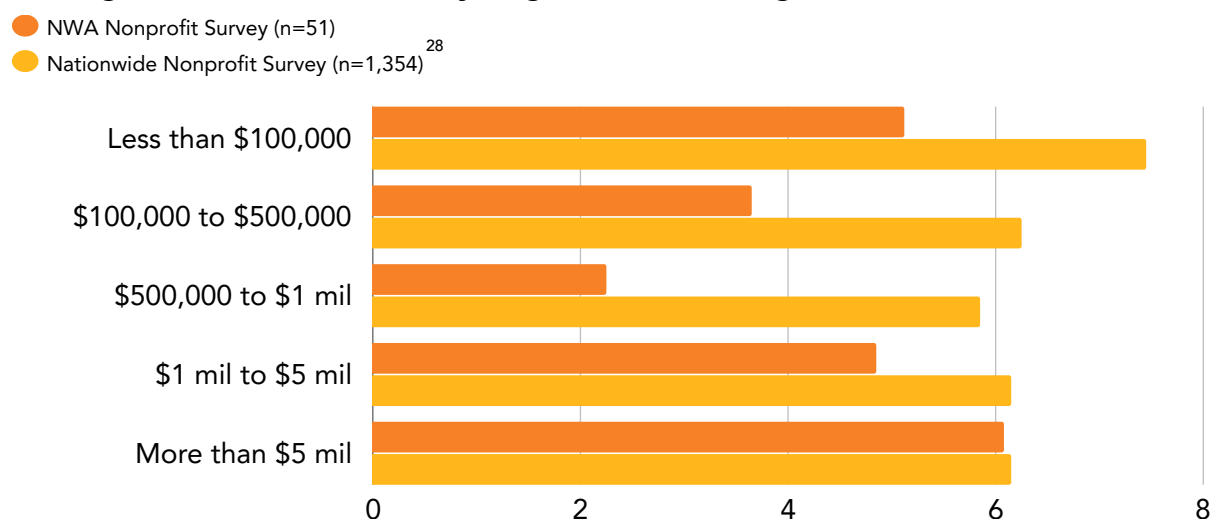
Local organizations tend to see more benefits than challenges, but the average net benefit score is relatively low compared to the nationwide benchmark.



²⁷ Hager & Brudney, 2004.

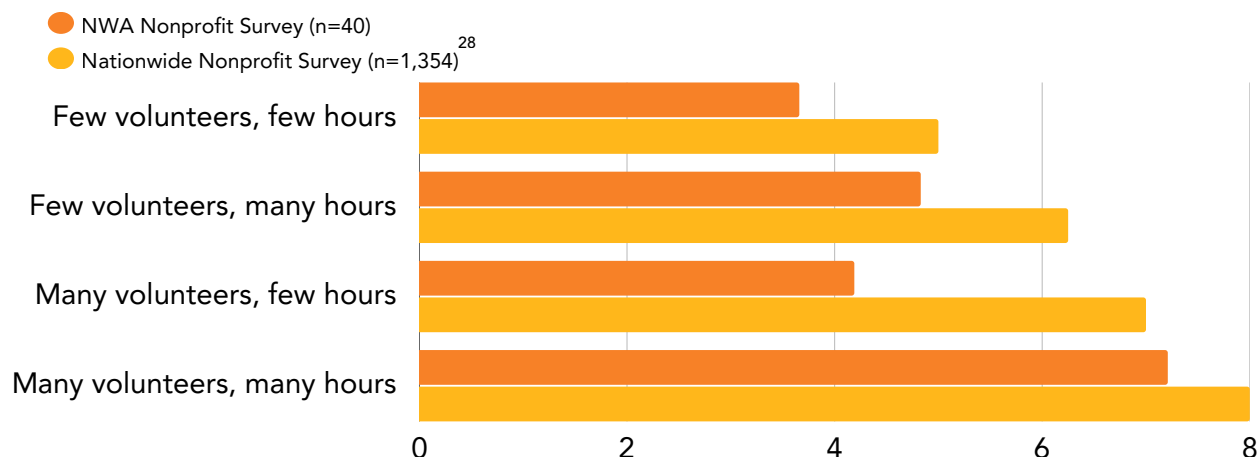
Among the nationwide dataset, organizations with less than \$100,000 in annual expenses have significantly higher net benefits scores on average. Hager and Brudney hypothesize that “smaller organizations have fewer staff members to train, are less likely to use volunteers in specialized tasks, and are less likely to confront regulatory constraints,” all of which may reduce their overall challenges. They also state that the smallest organizations have higher net benefits because they tend to rely more heavily on and report greater benefits from volunteers. Given the comparatively smaller sample size of NWA organizations, we should be cautious about making claims about the relationship between budget and net benefits for the NWA sample, but it is notable that the smallest budget size (less than \$100,000) and largest (more than \$5 million) organizations tend to see the largest net benefits. Smaller organizations may see more benefits and large organizations may see fewer challenges.²⁸

Average Net Benefits Score by Organizational Budget Size



In contrast, both the regional and nationwide nonprofit organizations with the largest scope of volunteer use tend to have the highest net benefits scores. Previous work by Hager and Brudney has shown that organizations with a large scope of volunteer use (many volunteers, many hours) typically make the greatest investments in volunteer management capacity, yielding greater benefits.²⁸

Average Net Benefits Score by Scope of Volunteer Use



²⁸ *Ibid.*

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES

Research has identified a series of proven practices that matter for volunteer performance and retention. **Organizations that adopt more volunteer management best practices tend to have more effective volunteer engagement and higher retention rates.**

66%

n=50
NWA Nonprofit Survey

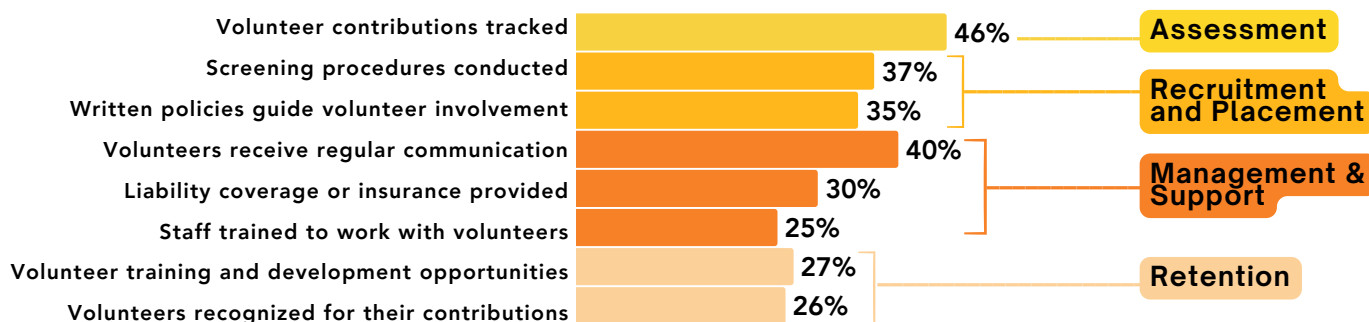
of respondents said that their organization has someone dedicated to volunteer management

Only a quarter of the organizations surveyed have a staff member that devotes at least half of their time to volunteer management.

Almost half of regional nonprofits regularly track volunteer contributions but only a quarter have implemented more extensive staff and volunteer training.

Percent of Respondents Who Have Adopted the Listed Volunteer Management Best Practices to a "Large Degree"

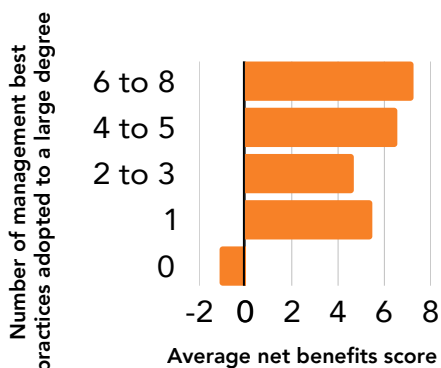
n=52
NWA Nonprofit Survey



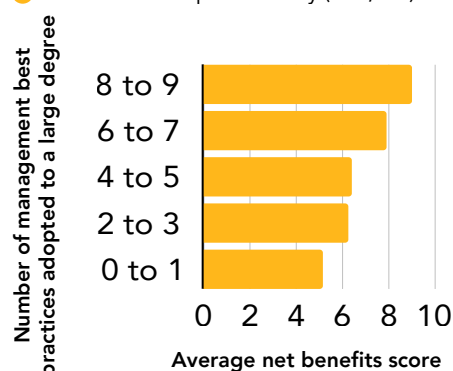
As the number of management best practices increases, so do the net benefits – a finding that's true nationally and for NWA.

Average Net Benefits Score by Number of Management Practices Adopted to a "Large Degree"

● NWA Nonprofit Survey (n=50)



● Nationwide Nonprofit Survey (n=1,354)²⁹



²⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

There are many reasons why organizations might not be able to prioritize proven management best practices. In NWA focus groups and surveys, regional nonprofits described a patchwork of investments, shaped by size, sector, and budgets.

- **Staffing:** Some organizations fund a dedicated volunteer coordinator, while many fold volunteer management into already-stretched program or development roles, contributing to “do-it-myself” tendencies when time is tight.
- **Systems & tools:** Larger nonprofits use platforms/directories to market and manage opportunities (e.g., Volunteer Action Center, GivePulse), but adoption is inconsistent and smaller organizations often lack a shared system to reach volunteers region-wide.
- **Onboarding, training, and supervision:** Nonprofit leaders emphasized the need for clear role descriptions, training, and ongoing support to ensure quality and reliability. Specialized sectors like health and law require more in-depth volunteer training, which can be a burden on staff members, especially if volunteers are not consistently engaged.
- **Risk management:** Background checks, liability coverage, and compliance steps are real costs that some small organizations struggle to budget for or navigate. Even for bigger organizations, this can be a struggle to manage.

“ It’s the literal manpower it takes when they’re on ground to make sure they’re on task or just the communication relationship it takes to [say] ‘hey, don’t forget you signed up to come.’ There’s just a lot of work that goes into managing them, and then **your staff can get bogged down in the management piece and can’t do their job.** ”
– Community and Economic Development

“ **One thing we face is a central person who can coordinate that process.** We try to hire a volunteer coordinator and then sometimes there is not enough work for them to do, but then when you don’t have them, **you really realize you do need someone.** ”
– Community and Economic Development

“ If we knew more about different tasks that different organizations offered volunteers, **we could match and almost advertise in a more personalized way within our schools...** I don’t want to send someone who doesn’t have the right skill set to a place where they don’t make a great impression...because maybe that just wasn’t the right place for them. **There’s a big disconnect for us and how to access information to provide to our students.** ”
– Education

“ It takes about four weeks for someone to get through our application process because **we’re doing criminal background checks, we’re doing drug screens, we’re doing the HIPAA training...** that long application process, that’s a challenge for us [in terms of recruiting volunteers]. ”
– Health and Human Services

RECRUITMENT IS A MAJOR CHALLENGE

Northwest Arkansas is one of the fastest-growing regions in the country, adding new residents at a rapid pace. Yet local nonprofits report that volunteer roles, especially time-bound or skills-based ones, too often go unfilled, even as community willingness to serve appears strong. **Two-thirds of nonprofit leaders in our study said that finding enough volunteers is a problem for their organization.** They also struggle with finding volunteers with the right skills who are available when they are needed. This prevents organizations from using volunteers effectively to carry out their mission.

The result is a **mismatch between supply and readiness**: volunteer interest exists, but the region lacks consistent, shared capacity to convert that interest into placements that fit organizations' real-time needs.

WHY IS IT SO HARD TO FIND VOLUNTEERS?

01

Fragmented discovery

Organizations rely on disparate channels to reach potential volunteers without a unified regional "front door."

Nonprofits asked for a centralized database so residents can quickly find roles that fit.

02

Limited capacity to engage volunteers

Many nonprofits, especially smaller ones, lack a dedicated volunteer manager and must fold engagement into overloaded positions. This means limited time to design volunteer roles and tasks.

03

Role design and timing mismatch

There's a gap between what makes volunteering feasible for residents and what nonprofits offer. When opportunities don't match people's schedules or interests, recruitment slows and last-minute scrambles are common.

04

Screening friction

Background checks, insurance, and policy compliance are essential, but they take time and money. Smaller organizations told us these steps can delay volunteer placement or deter qualified candidates for urgent openings.

05

Limited shared data

NWA lacks a common picture of who is volunteering, where gaps exist, and which roles routinely go unfilled. Without shared metrics, organizations and funders can't target recruitment or capacity investments where they'll make the biggest difference.

To close the "right person, right time" gap, solutions must focus on **strengthening regional coordination, building organizational capacity, and developing shared infrastructure.**

The next section will provide **more details on the kinds of volunteer opportunities residents are interested in**, particularly those for whom service is not (yet) a regular part of their routine.

MULTIPLE MOTIVATIONS MATTER

#3

Residents are most likely to volunteer when opportunities align with their values, skills, and schedules, and when they foster a sense of community connection.

85%

volunteered at least once
in the past 12 months

n= 530
NWA Resident Survey

66%

volunteered a few times
a month or more

n= 519
NWA Resident Survey

54%

did both formal and
informal volunteering

n= 451
NWA Resident Survey

VOLUNTEER MOTIVATIONS

Volunteering plays a role in creating vibrant, welcoming, and connected neighborhoods, sectors, and residents. In addition to contributing to the mission and financial success of area nonprofits and charitable organizations, individuals have a variety of reasons for volunteering – from supporting causes and communities, to fostering personal and professional development.³⁰ Volunteering has been shown to improve mental health, combat loneliness, and build critical skills that can be used in the workplace and other areas of life.³¹

People in Northwest Arkansas will volunteer when opportunities fit their lives: their values, schedules, skills, and access needs. Our resident survey clearly demonstrated that the desire to contribute is there – it's a matter of designing roles around how residents actually live, work, and move.

Residents are most motivated to volunteer when it aligns with their values and causes they care about, helps them feel connected to their neighbors and home, and offers meaningful, visible impact – especially chances to learn or apply skills. This aligns with findings from literature which indicate that **considering volunteers' motivations is a key part of assigning them to roles and tasks** and creating rewarding and satisfying positions, providing challenging and interesting work, offering opportunities for individual growth and development, along with crafting appealing social interactions.³² Appropriately matching volunteers' motivations and abilities and the work and tasks they are assigned increases volunteer satisfaction and reduces turnover.³³

What tailored volunteer matching looks like in practice:

- Cause alignment (youth, hunger relief, environment, arts & culture, faith-based)
- Community connection and belonging (meeting people, serving with friends/family)
- Skill use and growth (short projects that use professional or lived experience)

³⁰ [*Tropp & Dehrone, 2022.*](#)

³¹ [*Points of Light, 2025.*](#)

³² [*Nesbit et al., 2018.*](#)

³³ [*Ibid.*](#)

Values drive action: people give their time to causes they care about and to make their community a better place.

“What are the top reasons you volunteer? (Select up to 3).”

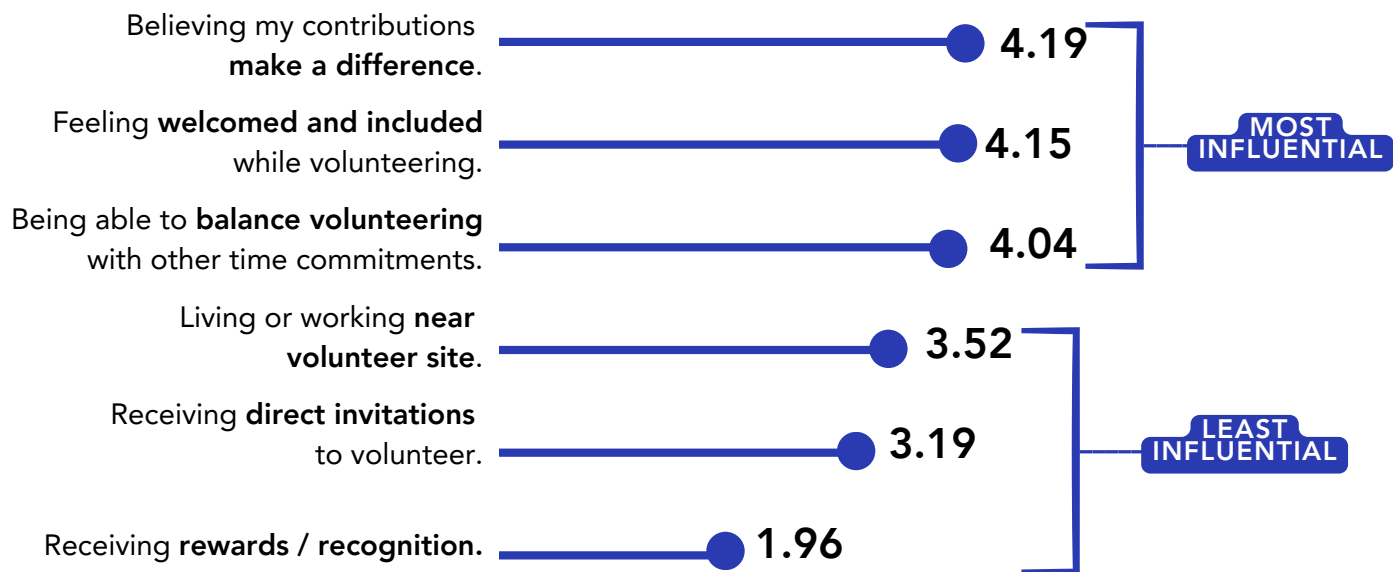
n= 477
NWA Resident Survey



When volunteering, NWA residents want to see that they’re making a difference and to feel welcomed. They aren’t motivated to participate by the promise of rewards.

“How much do the following factors influence your decision to volunteer at local organizations? (1 = No influence at all, 3 = Moderate influence, 5 = Very strong influence)”

n= 456-462
NWA Resident Survey



MAKING VOLUNTEERING POSSIBLE

For NWA residents, especially those who are not currently volunteering, feasibility hinges on **format and logistics**. When presented with a menu of options, NWA residents **prioritized**:

- **Short-term, flexible roles:** episodic, evening/weekends
- **Skill-based or clearly defined tasks:** matching interests/skills to tasks
- **Accessibility:** close-to-home locations, family-friendly options, role descriptions that are clear and easy to find
- **Social features:** opportunities to serve with friends, coworkers
- **Employer support:** paid time to volunteer

Flexibility helps residents turn intention into action. They make time for volunteering when it aligns with their responsibilities like work or school.

How does volunteering currently fit into your life or routine?

n=485
NWA Resident Survey



It's a **regular** part of my schedule

56%



I volunteer **when** I have time

27%



I'd like to volunteer more but **struggle** to find the time

17%

What helps you make time for volunteering?

n= 270 Check all that apply.

- 83%** I **prioritize it** like other commitments.
- 58%** Opportunity is **flexible** and fits my schedule.
- 21%** I integrate volunteering into **other activities**.
- 20%** I volunteer with **friends or family**.

What makes it difficult to find time to volunteer?

n= 211 Check all that apply.

- 60%** **Work or school** responsibilities
- 45%** **Not knowing** where or how to get involved
- 35%** **Caregiving or family** duties
- 34%** **Lack of flexible** opportunities

NWA residents most often cite **time, childcare, and awareness (“I don’t know where to start”)** as **barriers**. In order to increase volunteerism throughout the region, it needs to be easier for residents to find the “right fit” quickly, so they feel confident they are making the most of their available time and concretely making a difference for local nonprofits.

Newer NWA residents were *less likely* to say that volunteering is a regular part of their routine and *more likely* to say that “not knowing where or how to get involved” and “lack of flexible volunteer opportunities” was a challenge.

Newer residents and those who are currently employed are more interested in one-time events while residents who have lived here longer and retirees are more drawn to ongoing roles.

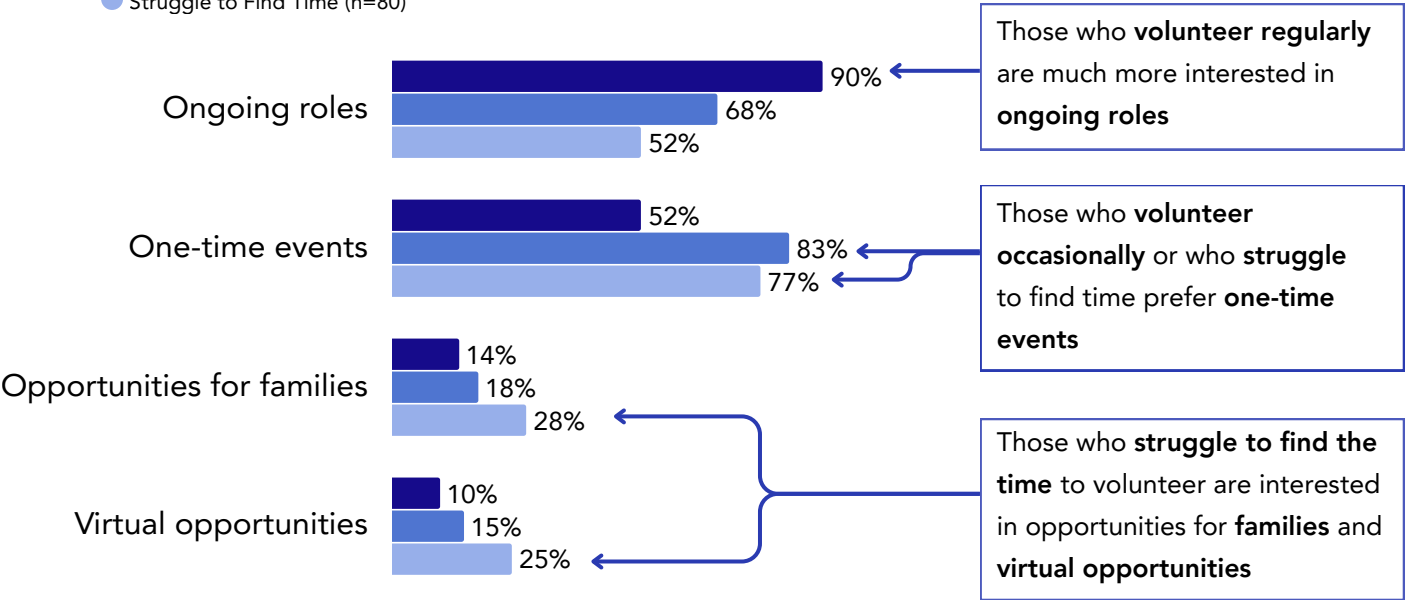
Volunteer opportunities need to fit people’s routines. Ongoing roles make sense for those with consistent schedules, while one-time options work best for those juggling multiple commitments.

“What types of volunteer opportunities are you most interested in? (Select all that apply).”

n=470

NWA Resident Survey

- Volunteer Regularly (n=259)
- Volunteer Occasionally (n=131)
- Struggle to Find Time (n=80)



TURNING INTEREST INTO INVOLVEMENT

Residents currently learn about volunteer opportunities through a variety of channels like word of mouth, social media, and direct invitations to volunteer. **Having a clear sense of organizations’ needs and expectations would help them turn these requests across disparate channels into a deliberate decision to volunteer.**

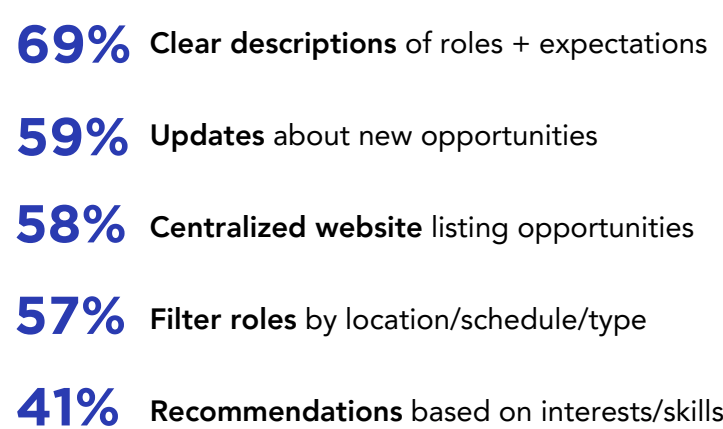
“How do you currently find out about volunteer opportunities? (Check all that apply)”

n=456
NWA Resident Survey



“What would help you find volunteer opportunities that are a good fit for you? (Check all that apply)”

n=449
NWA Resident Survey



What would have the biggest impact on residents’ decision to volunteer:

1. Finding opportunities that match their skills or interests
2. Having clearer information about how to get involved or more details about available opportunities
3. Finding opportunities that help them feel more connected to their community

#4

STRONG SUPPORT FOR A VOLUNTEER CENTER

Stakeholders across NWA see promise in a volunteer center that bridges the gap between community willingness to serve and organizational capacity.

ISSUES A VOLUNTEER CENTER NEEDS TO SOLVE

If organizations in the region collectively work together to design roles to fit *how* people can serve, more people will serve. Concretely, that means addressing the following issues for regional nonprofits and residents:

CAPACITY CHALLENGES

Regional nonprofits **lack the infrastructure and systems to effectively recruit, train, and manage volunteers**. Recruitment efforts are fragmented across channels, creating missed opportunities. Limited staff training and time-intensive applications and onboarding further constrain impact.

Potential solutions

- **Centralized “front door”** for volunteer opportunities, offering visibility across nonprofits and easy searches by time, location, and skills
- **Shared resources** for screening, onboarding, and scheduling to reduce admin
- **Standardized training** for volunteer managers to learn and implement best practices

ROLES & RESIDENTS MISMATCH

Volunteer opportunities often **fail to align with people’s skills, schedules, and motivations**. Residents want flexible, meaningful roles that fit their lives and values, but nonprofits struggle to design and manage roles that meet these expectations.

Potential solutions

- **More one-time opportunities:** roles are broken down into well-defined tasks
- **Virtual options:** remote roles for various tasks to broaden access
- **Streamlined intake:** Use skill-matching questions to define roles and what success means
- **Social motivation:** Bring-a-friend shifts and team-based volunteering

BARRIERS TO ACCESS

Even when interest exists, **practical and cultural barriers**—such as transportation, childcare, language, and unclear expectations—**limit participation**. These disproportionately affect younger and diverse residents.

Potential solutions

- **Flexible scheduling:** Offer family-friendly shifts, weekend/evening options, and roles near community hubs
- **Multilingual and plain-language outreach:** Translate role descriptions and use accessible language
- **Fast digital sign-ups and pre-cleared screening:** Lower friction with simple onboarding and clear paths to service

Regional nonprofits are looking for resources that help them develop more efficient volunteer management infrastructure. They were excited about a volunteer center's ability to provide smarter volunteer matching, common training and resources, and increased visibility for their efforts to engage volunteers. Having a shared space to coordinate efforts and build collective capacity was especially appealing if it reduced the administrative burden on individual organizations.

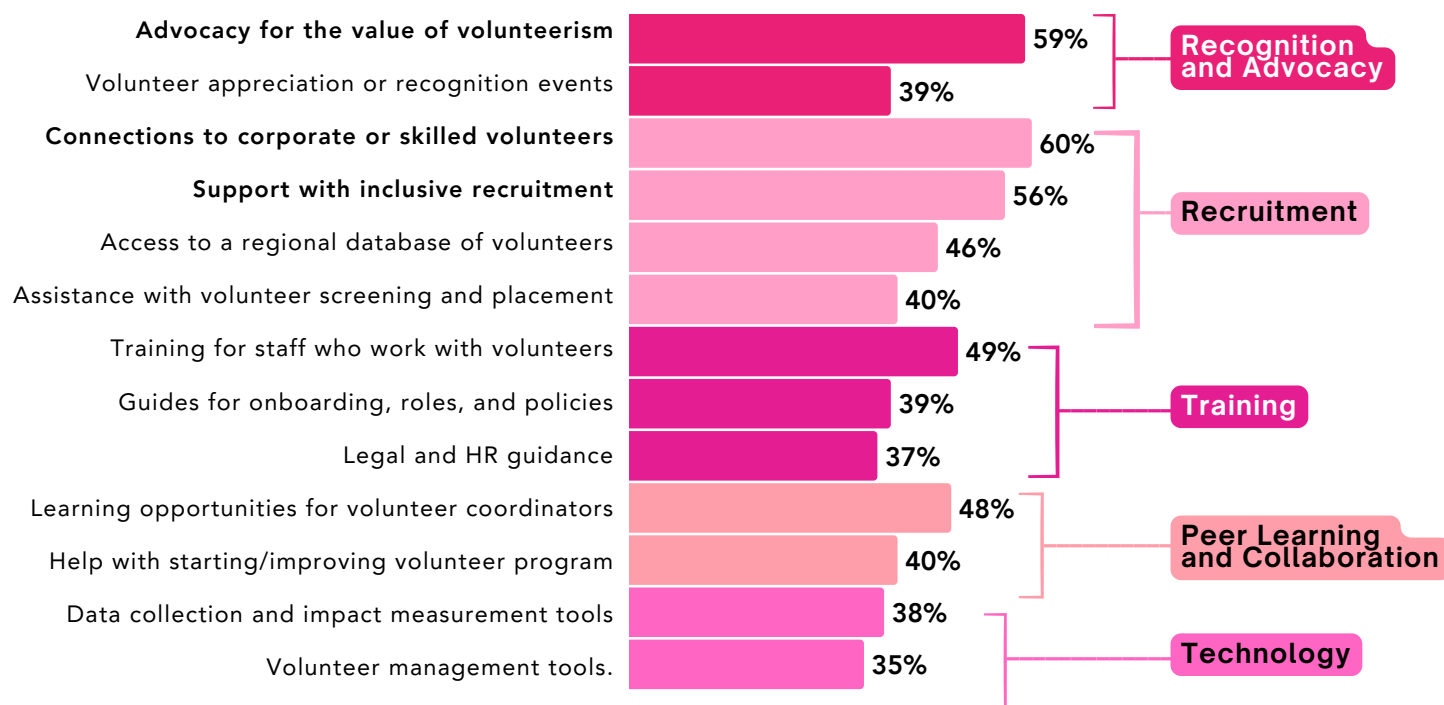
To boost volunteer engagement and maximize benefits, organizations need assistance with advocacy, recruitment, and staff training.

"To what extent would the following services help your organization grow or strengthen its volunteer program?"

Percentage of respondents who answered Very or Extremely Helpful

n=52

NWA Nonprofit Survey



It would help us **connect with those in the community who are actively looking for service opportunities**. A centralized system could match volunteer interests with our event needs, track availability, and even help with communication and reminders. **This kind of structure would make it easier to plan ahead** and ensure we have the right support in place to make our events successful.

– Community and Economic Development



Offering retreats and trainings for professional development for volunteer professionals in the community, **providing a thriving and active sounding board for volunteer professionals**.

– Health



As our coordinator for individual volunteers, **I would welcome training and best practices** on how to best appreciate and retain volunteers.

– Community and Economic Development

CONCERNS MENTIONED BY REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

While excitement was high (55% of respondents said they would be *somewhat or extremely likely* to engage with a volunteer center if one were created), nonprofits want clarity on what it would take to make a volunteer center work. Questions centered on the following themes:

Sustainability

How will a volunteer center be funded, staffed, and sustained over time?

Equity

How will the center ensure that small and under-resourced organizations benefit from shared tools and volunteer support?

Avoiding Duplication

How will this effort incorporate existing systems like GivePulse?
How will it be different from other resources and initiatives?

Accessibility

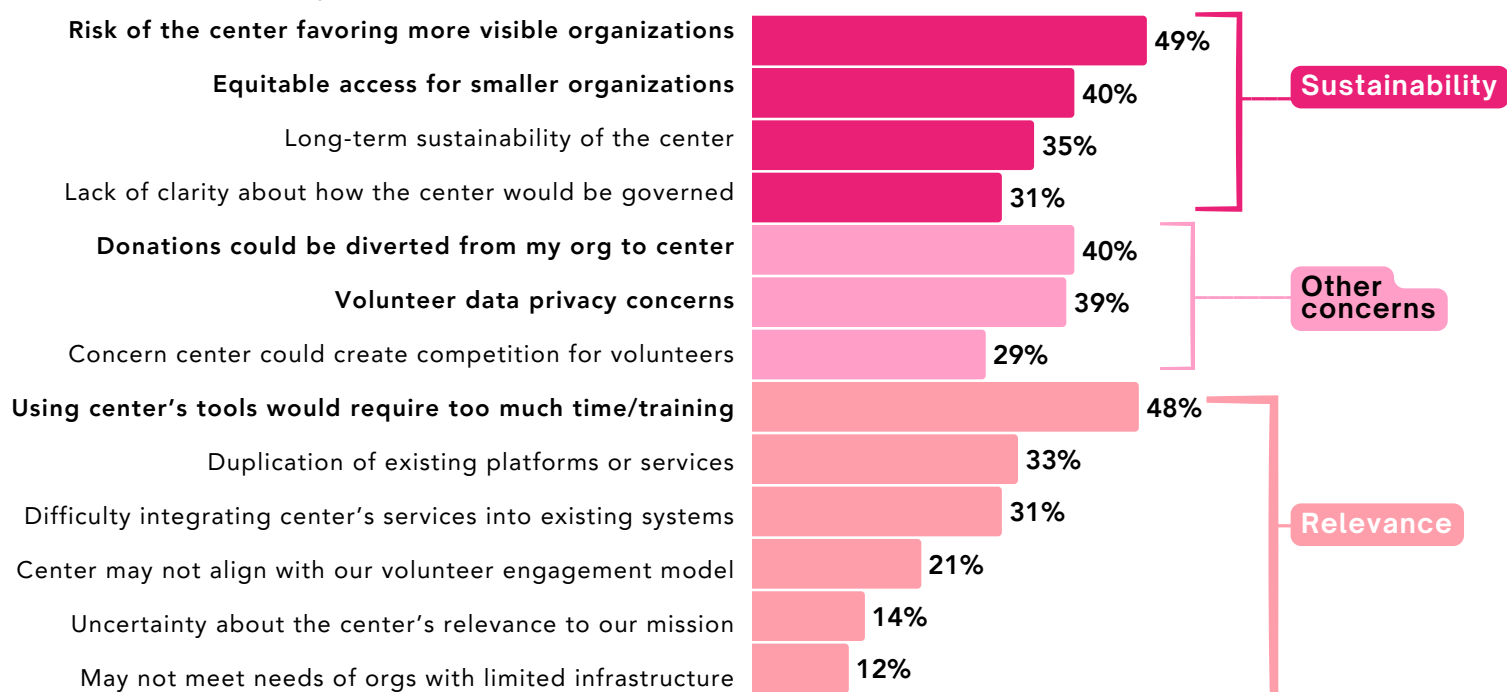
Where would it be located? Would it be a physical space, a virtual platform, or both?

"What concerns would your organization have about participating in a regional volunteer center, if one were developed?"

Percentage of respondents who answered a Significant Concern or Major Concern

n=52

NWA Nonprofit Survey





Volunteer Center Models and Opportunities for Future Study

VOLUNTEER CENTER MODELS

Volunteer centers exist in a variety of different formats, from standalone nonprofits to being part of larger entities, community service organizations, universities, or government agencies. Different organizations prioritize different needs and have different structures. When they're well-established, volunteer centers can solve critical issues for nonprofits and volunteer forces, simplifying recruitment and building organizational capacity.

When considering what will best support NWA nonprofits' ability to engage volunteers, each of the exemplar models below offer something relevant to consider and have local affiliates close to or in Northwest Arkansas.

This page outlines the five models that are most applicable to NWA and the following pages articulate how these entities map onto the **key opportunity areas detailed at the beginning of the report**: 1) **centralized volunteer recruitment** 2) **shared infrastructure** 3) **standardized data** and 4) **strategic coordination around regional priorities**.



A national nonprofit network that strengthens volunteer engagement by connecting individuals to service opportunities and building organizational capacity.

<https://www.pointsoflight.org/>
<https://www.volunteeralive.org/servicecenterprise.php>



A Kansas City-based Points of Light affiliate that connects volunteers and organizations through an online directory and community partnerships that foster long-term social impact.

<https://uncoverkc.org/>



VOLUNTEEROZARKS

Volunteer Ozarks is a regional hub hosted by United Way of the Ozarks that centralizes volunteer listings and events across Southwest Missouri and Northwest Arkansas to support local nonprofits and civic engagement.

<https://unitedwaynwa.org/>
<https://volunteerozarks.com/>

VOLUNTEER NOW



VolunteerNow is a Dallas-based volunteer center that operates VOLY.org, a comprehensive platform for matching, managing, and training volunteers.

<https://www.volnow.org>
<https://www.voly.org/>



GivePulse is a volunteer management system that has been adopted statewide by Engage Arkansas and campus-wide by the University of Arkansas, through their Volunteer Action Center.

<https://learn.givepulse.com/>
<https://engagearkansas.org/>
<https://service.uark.edu/volunteer-action-center/>

1. CENTRALIZED RECRUITMENT

Centralized recruitment would reduce friction for residents and make it easier for nonprofits to find reliable volunteers. A single portal is often the most visible “product” a volunteer center can offer – it’s high value and relatively low cost (if you use an existing management system).

Model	What It Does	Implications for NWA
	Operates a national volunteer database and affiliate portals; integrates listings across regions; provides branded “Days of Service” campaigns.	NWA could join this network for visibility and national alignment, using Points of Light as the backbone for regional listings.
 VOLUNTEEROZARKS	Hosts a regional portal where nonprofits list and manage volunteer opportunities; facilitates Days of Caring and group placements.	A cost-effective local model NWA could replicate by housing the volunteer center under an existing organization like United Way.
VOLUNTEER NOW 	Offers VOLY.org: proprietary volunteer management system with listings, scheduling, and background checks for large regions.	A scalable digital infrastructure NWA could adopt if there’s appetite for custom tech and data integration.
   	Provides statewide volunteer posting and tracking; integrates with universities and nonprofits for shared data and metrics.	NWA could expand Engage Arkansas’s footprint by adding a branded regional layer instead of building a new portal. There’s also an opportunity to sync with U of A’s GivePulse platform, which would facilitate strong connections with students.

2. SHARED INFRASTRUCTURE & CAPACITY BUILDING

Volunteer management often falls on small nonprofit teams without HR or training capacity. Providing shared templates, onboarding tools, and training could dramatically increase regional efficiency and volunteer experience quality.

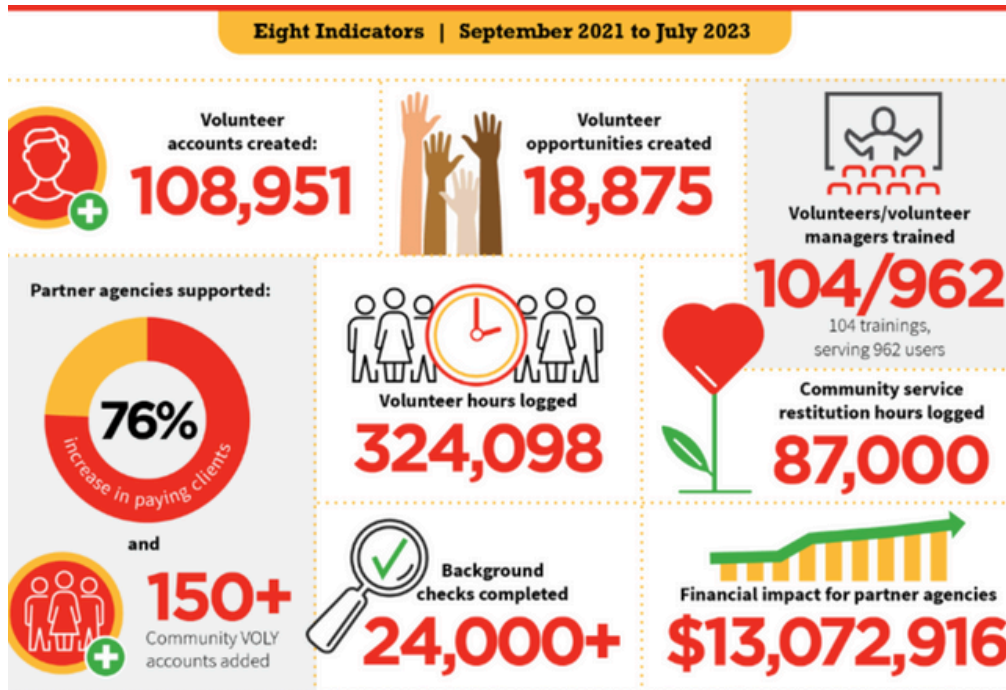
Model	What It Does	Implications for NWA
	Offers structured training, certification, and consulting to help organizations strengthen volunteer engagement systems.	A proven framework NWA could license or partner on, especially for nonprofits wanting to professionalize volunteer programs.
	Offers consulting, custom onboarding templates, and volunteer management system setup for local nonprofits.	NWA could partner with Uncover KC or create a similar model in the region, adapting existing tools to fit the needs of these communities.
	Provides professional development for volunteer managers and schools; integrates scheduling, communication, and background checks.	NWA could adapt this “shared services” model to offer centralized onboarding, background-check coordination, or training modules. It could also potentially utilize VOLY’s existing systems.

3. SHARED DATA & STORYTELLING

Currently, there's limited regional data showing how volunteers contribute to community impact. A volunteer center could aggregate data (e.g., number of volunteers, hours contributed, dollar value of their work) to demonstrate collective value to funders and policymakers. Examples of metrics are included on the next page.

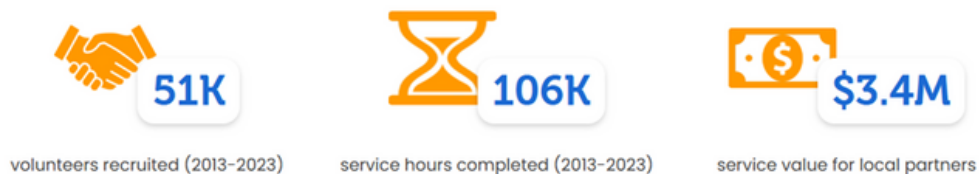
Model	What It Does	Implications for NWA
	Points of Light aggregates volunteer hours and social impact data nationally; produces research and storytelling reports. UncoverKC collects data on participating nonprofits and their impact.	Offers a strong framework for metrics and narrative—NWA could adapt its impact categories locally.
	Tracks participation at the program level, especially for “Days of Caring” and county-specific reports.	A simpler model that could work in early stages, with data aggregation handled manually or through system integration.
	Offers impact dashboards and metrics for affiliates and corporate partners.	A good reference if NWA wants to invest in dashboards or data visualization tools.
	Built-in tracking for hours, impact value, and event participation; likely used by university for research and engagement reports.	NWA could adopt GivePulse to capture cross-sector volunteer data and feed into regional storytelling, including data on how students and corporate groups are engaged.

The images below demonstrate the kinds of data that could be collected and reported on to show collective impact across regional nonprofit organizations.



Eight indicators used by VolunteerNow in their annual impact report. ³⁴

UKC VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT: BY THE NUMBERS



UKC CORPORATE CARES: BY THE NUMBERS



Metrics used by Uncover KC in their volunteer management and corporate volunteering programs. ³⁵

³⁴ [Volunteer Now, 2023.](#)

³⁵ [Uncover KC Volunteer Management, 2025.](#) [Uncover KC Corporate Cares, 2025.](#)

4. STRATEGIC COORDINATION ON REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Volunteers are often mobilized in silos, by cause or organization. Organizations may be duplicating efforts, limiting their ability to make a sustained impact on the region. A regional center could align service around shared goals, such as food security, youth mentorship, or environmental sustainability.

Model	What It Does	Implications for NWA
	Runs national issue campaigns and affiliate-led community initiatives (e.g., disaster recovery, civic engagement).	Offers templates for cross-sector campaigns that NWA could localize.
	Through their Community Development program, Uncover KC “partners with cross-sector organizations to build systems and support that create lasting solutions to social issues on a large scale.” ³⁶	Could serve as a blueprint for NWA’s “collective action” approach, especially for education or workforce-aligned volunteering.
 VOLUNTEEROZARKS	Coordinates large-scale service days and connects businesses with nonprofits for collective impact efforts.	A clear model for how to convene a variety of partners around regional priorities.
	Coordinates volunteer response during regional disasters and civic mobilizations.	Relevant for NWA given natural disaster risk and need for flexible mobilization networks.

³⁶ *Uncover KC Community Development, 2025.*

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE STUDY

The initial feasibility study confirmed strong interest from nonprofits and residents in a regional volunteer center. To continue building a culture of service in Northwest Arkansas, a center could increase organizational capacity for volunteer management and provide clearer, more accessible opportunities for residents to give their time.

A future phase of study could explore the feasibility of equipping a volunteer center to engage corporate partners because of its potential to support:

Strategic fit with regional employers.

Walmart/Sam's Club, Tyson Foods, and J.B. Hunt anchor the local economy and workforce. Meeting the region "where people are" addresses time (the most cited barrier to volunteering) by enabling service during the workday, offering team-based projects, and providing near-site or on-site options. This aligns with employer goals around engagement, retention, leadership development, and corporate social responsibility.

Better matches and higher impact.

For nonprofits, a center-mediated corporate channel could reduce the burden of organizing corporate volunteering days and create pathways for ongoing, skills-based engagement. For employers, the center could be a single regional hub for volunteering, curate credible nonprofit projects, and provide reporting on hours and outcomes.

Sustainability for the center.

Corporate partnerships can provide predictable demand (teams, cycles), in-kind expertise (IT, finance, marketing), and often co-funding or sponsorship—supporting the center's long-term viability and the broader volunteer ecosystem.

Research shows that corporate volunteering fosters a sense of community and positively influences employees' attitudes toward their organization, supporting talent attraction and retention.³⁷ Locally, **83%** of employed respondents in our resident survey said work responsibilities make it hard to volunteer, and **28%** said being able to volunteer during work hours would make a difference, underscoring the potential impact of employer-supported models.

Research Questions

Future research could test the feasibility of equipping the volunteer center to engage corporate partnerships by exploring these questions:

1. What is the interest and capacity among large and mid-size employers in NWA to partner with a regional volunteer center, and what value propositions resonate most?
2. How does interest and capacity vary by type of employer (scale of workforce, organizational culture, etc.)?
3. What currently motivates employees to participate in corporate volunteering and how could this shift or grow within a volunteer center model? What structures and support would help them make time for volunteering?

37 [Haski-Leventhal et al., 2010](#); [Koolen-Maas et al. \(2022\)](#); [Rodell & Lynch \(2016\)](#); [Howard & Serviss \(2022\)](#).

Appendices

- NWA Nonprofit Focus Group Protocol
- NWA Nonprofit Survey
- NWA Resident Survey
- References

NWA NONPROFIT FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

FRAMING FOR FOCUS GROUP

- Both positive and negative comments are strongly encouraged. There are no right or wrong answers.
- One person speaks at a time. While we might have different opinions, it is important to be respectful.
- We want to hear from everyone here today!
- We will record the conversation for transcription purposes. The feedback will be analyzed and shared with the Jones Center and Walmart.org. Your name will not be associated with what you say.
- To thank you for your participation, we will offer a \$25 Visa gift card.

USE OF VOLUNTEERS

- **How do you use volunteers in your organization? Think broadly about the value they provide through the work they do, rather than specific tasks.**
- How does their work compare to the kind of work that full-time staff at your organization do?
- What do you think motivates volunteers to join your organization, and what keeps them engaged?
- **What is the greatest value/primary benefit that volunteers bring to your organization?**

CHALLENGES WITH VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

- **Given what you've shared about how volunteers contribute to your mission, what types of support or capacity would help you engage volunteers even more effectively?**
- What are the biggest obstacles you face in recruiting, managing, and retaining volunteers?
- **What additional support do you wish volunteers could provide to help achieve your organization's mission?**
- What would make it possible for volunteers to provide this level of support?
- Challenges for Reference:
 - Recruitment: Finding right number + type of volunteers
 - Funding: Staff time, funds to support volunteer involvement
 - Regulatory: Background checks, insurance
 - Volunteer Performance: Absenteeism, unreliability

VOLUNTEER CENTER

- **Framing: Other regions have volunteer centers that serve as hubs for connecting nonprofits with volunteers and provide organizational support by:**
 - Offering databases of volunteer opportunities and available volunteers
 - Advocating for volunteerism
 - Assisting with volunteer recruitment, screening, and placement
 - Providing training and technical assistance to volunteer coordinators
- **If there were a regional volunteer center focused on strengthening volunteer engagement across nonprofits in this region, what kinds of support or collaboration would be most valuable to your organization?**
- **Which of these services would be most valuable to your organization, and why?**
- What challenges / gaps in volunteer support could a volunteer center help address?
- In what ways might a regional volunteer center help amplify the impact of your volunteers across the community?
- Are there any other factors a volunteer center should consider to truly serve regional nonprofits well?
- Are there any concerns about a centralized volunteer center in the region?

CLOSING

- **Any last thoughts?**
- Thank you for your insights, which will directly shape initiatives to better support volunteer infrastructure throughout the region.
- We will follow up with details about accessing your \$25 gift card in the next week.
- You can reach me at bryn.pernot@crystalbridges.org if you have any additional thoughts you want to send to me directly.

NWA NONPROFIT SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

Welcome, and thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

The Center for Audience Research & Evaluation (CARE) at Crystal Bridges is conducting this study on behalf of the Jones Center to better understand how non-profits engage volunteers—and what support could help strengthen that work.

Your responses will help us explore the feasibility of a **regional volunteer center** and identify opportunities to build capacity across the nonprofit sector. We're interested in hearing from organizations of all sizes and missions! Even if you are not personally responsible for managing volunteers, your perspective is still valuable.

The survey should take approximately **12–15 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential, and any identifying information will only be used to help us understand patterns across organizations, not to evaluate individual responses. Please respond to the questions as presented. You'll also have a chance to share your thoughts in your own words near the end of the survey.

As a thank you, you'll be entered into a drawing for a **\$50 VISA gift card**. If you have any questions, please contact research@crystalbridges.org.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

First, we'll start with some background details about your organization. This allows us to understand your organization's unique perspective.

1. What is the name of your organization?

2. Which of the following best describes your role in the organization?

- ☐ I am the primary person responsible for coordinating volunteer engagement.
- ☐ I am one of several staff who share responsibility for volunteer engagement.
- ☐ I support volunteer engagement occasionally or as part of a broader role.
- ☐ I supervise or manage staff who are responsible for volunteer engagement.
- ☐ I am aware of volunteer engagement efforts but not directly involved.
- ☐ I am not involved at all in volunteer engagement. [SKIP TO Q27]
- ☐ My organization does not currently engage volunteers [SKIP TO Q20]

3. What is your organization's main sector?

- ☐ Arts, culture, and humanities
- ☐ Community and economic development
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Environment
- ☐ Faith-based
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Human services
- ☐ Sports and recreation
- ☐ Other (please specify)

4. What is your organization's annual operating budget?

- ☐ Less than \$50,000
- ☐ \$50,000-\$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 – \$249,999
- ☐ \$250,000 - \$499,999
- ☐ \$500,000 – \$999,999
- ☐ \$1 million – \$2.49 million
- ☐ \$2.5 million – \$4.99 million
- ☐ \$5 million - \$9.99 million
- ☐ \$10 million or more
- ☐ Not sure

5. Approximately what percentage of your organization's total budget is dedicated to supporting volunteer involvement (e.g., technology, training, equipment, recognition)?

- ☐ No specific budget is currently allocated for volunteer involvement
- ☐ Less than 1%
- ☐ 1-2%
- ☐ 3-5%
- ☐ 6-10%
- ☐ More than 10%
- ☐ Not sure

6. How many full-time staff members does your organization currently have?

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1-2
- ☐ 3-5
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ 11-20
- ☐ 21-50
- ☐ 51+

7. How many part-time staff members does your organization currently have?

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1-2
- ☐ 3-5
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ 11-20
- ☐ 21-50
- ☐ 51+

8. Do you have a staff member for volunteer dedicated to volunteer management?

- ☐ No staff or volunteer as volunteer manager [SKIP TO Q10]
- ☐ Volunteer responsible for volunteer admin
- ☐ Staff volunteer manager devoting less than half-time to volunteer admin
- ☐ Staff volunteer manager devoting at least half-time to volunteer admin

9. Has this person dedicated to volunteer management received formal training in volunteer administration (e.g., coursework, workshops, conferences that focus on volunteer management)?

- ☐ No formal training
- ☐ A bit of formal training
- ☐ Quite a lot of formal training

10. How many volunteers have you had in total over the last 12 months?

- ☐ 1-10
- ☐ 11-25
- ☐ 26-50
- ☐ 51-150
- ☐ 151-1000
- ☐ Over 1000

11. How many hours in total do volunteers work over the course of a typical week?

- ☐ 1-10
- ☐ 11-25
- ☐ 26-50
- ☐ 51-150
- ☐ 151-1000
- ☐ Over 1000

12. How essential are volunteers to fulfilling your organization's mission?

- ☐ Not at all essential – We do not currently engage volunteers [SKIP TO Q20]
- ☐ Slightly essential – Volunteers are helpful but not critical to our operations
- ☐ Moderately essential – Volunteers support some key programs or services
- ☐ Very essential - Volunteers are central to delivering our programs or services
- ☐ Absolutely essential - We could not fulfill our mission without volunteers

13. Optional: How does the involvement of volunteers enhance or support your organization's mission?

14. What is the main role that volunteers perform at your organization – the one to which your organization invests the most time, funding, and staff support?

- ☐ Direct service (e.g., mentoring, tutoring, delivering meals)
- ☐ External administrative support (e.g., fundraising, public relations, advocacy)
- ☐ Internal administrative support (e.g., filing, data entry, answering phones)
- ☐ Indirect service (e.g., environmental cleanup, event setup, logistics)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Now we'd like to ask you about how volunteer management and engagement plays out in your organization. There are no right or wrong answers, so please respond to the following questions as accurately as possible.

15. For each of the statements below, please note to what degree they apply to your organization from 1 = Not at all true to 5 = Completely true.

	Not at all true		Somewhat true		Completely true
	1	2	3	4	5
We have a strategic plan that includes volunteer engagement and/or a stated philosophy of engagement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We develop and regularly review volunteer engagement policies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We engage volunteers across all levels of the organization.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We regularly assess organizational needs to identify volunteer opportunities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We intentionally engage volunteers as part of a strategy to cultivate long-term support, including potential future donors.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We allocate adequate resources (budget, space, tools) to support volunteers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. For each of the volunteer management practices below, please note to what degree the practice has been adopted by your organization.

	Not adopted	Adopted to some degree	Adopted to a large degree
Written policies and position descriptions guide volunteer involvement.	☐	☐	☐
Liability coverage or insurance is provided for volunteers.	☐	☐	☐
There is a defined process for recruiting volunteers.	☐	☐	☐
Application and interview processes are used to assess volunteer fit.	☐	☐	☐
Screening procedures (e.g., background checks, HIPAA training) are conducted.	☐	☐	☐
Volunteers are matched to appropriate tasks or roles.	☐	☐	☐
Volunteers are provided with training and personal development opportunities.	☐	☐	☐
Staff are trained to work effectively with volunteers.	☐	☐	☐
Volunteers receive regular communication and supervision.	☐	☐	☐
Volunteers receive periodic reviews of their experience.	☐	☐	☐
Volunteer contributions and impact are regularly tracked and reported.	☐	☐	☐
Volunteers are recognized for their contributions (e.g., in award ceremonies).	☐	☐	☐
The value of volunteers is communicated to leadership and external stakeholders.	☐	☐	☐
There is a process to track whether volunteers become donors.	☐	☐	☐

17. Over time, how has the number of volunteers who later become donors changed at your organization?

- ☐ We've seen a noticeable increase
- ☐ We've seen a slight increase
- ☐ It has stayed about the same
- ☐ We've seen a decrease
- ☐ Not sure/we haven't analyzed this

18. To what extent do volunteers provide the following benefits to your organization?

	Not at all	Moderate extent	Great extent
Provide cost-savings to the organization	☐	☐	☐
Provide more detailed attention to the people served	☐	☐	☐
Provide increased public support for programs, or improved community relations	☐	☐	☐
Increase the quality of services or programs provided	☐	☐	☐
Allow the organization to provide services or levels of services it otherwise could not provide	☐	☐	☐
Provide access to specialized legal, financial, management, or technology expertise	☐	☐	☐
Provide a talent pool for staff positions	☐	☐	☐
Make financial contributions to the organization	☐	☐	☐

19. To what extent are the following issues a problem for your organization?

	Not a problem	Small problem	Big problem
Recruiting a sufficient number of volunteers	☐	☐	☐
Recruiting volunteers with the right skills or expertise	☐	☐	☐
Recruiting volunteers available during the workday	☐	☐	☐
Recruiting volunteers available for weekend activities	☐	☐	☐
Finding meaningful tasks or roles for volunteers	☐	☐	☐
Having more volunteers than the organization can accommodate	☐	☐	☐
Indifference or resistance on the part of staff or the board toward volunteers	☐	☐	☐
Lack of adequate funds for supporting volunteer involvement	☐	☐	☐

	Not a problem	Small problem	Big problem
Policy or regulatory constraints to working with volunteers, such as background checks and drug tests	☐	☐	☐
Legal liabilities and associated costs, such as insurance	☐	☐	☐
Absenteeism, unreliability, or poor work habits or work quality on the part of volunteers	☐	☐	☐

VOLUNTEER CENTER

Now, we'd like to ask you about what kind of support your organization might need to better engage volunteers.

You will see mentions of a volunteer center in the following questions. For your reference, here is a definition and example of the services such a center might provide.

Volunteer centers support community engagement through a range of activities, such as offering databases of volunteer opportunities and available volunteers, advocating for volunteerism, and assisting with volunteer recruitment, screening, and placement. They provide consultation for organizations starting volunteer programs, training and technical assistance to volunteer coordinators, and research and dissemination of community data.

20. To what extent would the following services help your organization grow or strengthen its volunteer program? (1 = Not at all helpful, 5 = Extremely helpful)

Volunteer Recruitment and Placement

	Not at all helpful		Somewhat helpful		Extremely helpful
	1	2	3	4	5
Access to a regional database of available volunteers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Support with inclusive and targeted volunteer recruitment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Connections to corporate, group, or skilled volunteers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assistance with volunteer screening, and placement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Training and Capacity Building

	Not at all helpful		Somewhat helpful		Extremely helpful
	1	2	3	4	5
Training for staff who manage or work with volunteers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Templates and guides for onboarding, role descriptions, and policies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Legal and HR guidance related to volunteer engagement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Technology and Tools

	Not at all helpful		Somewhat helpful		Extremely helpful
	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteer management tools (e.g., scheduling, hour tracking, communication)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Data collection and impact measurement tools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Recognition and Culture

	Not at all helpful		Somewhat helpful		Extremely helpful
	1	2	3	4	5
Regional volunteer appreciation or recognition events	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Advocacy for the value and impact of volunteerism	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Peer Learning and Collaboration

	Not at all helpful		Somewhat helpful		Extremely helpful
	1	2	3	4	5
Peer learning or networking opportunities for volunteer coordinators	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Consultation or technical assistance for starting or improving a volunteer program	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. Optional: What other services or support would make a regional volunteer center valuable in the long term?

22. What concerns would your organization have about participating in a regional volunteer center, if one were developed? (1 = Not a concern at all, 5 = A major concern)

Sustainability and Access

	Not a concern at all		Somewhat of a concern		A major concern
	1	2	3	4	5
Long-term sustainability or funding of the center	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of clarity about how center would be governed or staffed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Equitable access for small or under-resourced organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Risk of the center favoring larger or more visible organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Relevance and Fit

	Not a concern at all		Somewhat of a concern		A major concern
	1	2	3	4	5
Uncertainty about the center's relevance to our mission	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Concern that the center's services may not align with our volunteer engagement model	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Concern that the center may not meet the needs of organizations with limited or no current volunteer infrastructure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Difficulty integrating the center's services into our existing systems or workflows	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Concern that using the center's tools or systems would require significant staff time or training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Duplication of existing platforms or services (e.g., GivePulse, Deed)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other Concerns

	Not a concern at all		Somewhat of a concern		A major concern
	1	2	3	4	5
Data privacy or concerns about how volunteer information would be stored, shared, or used	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Concern that the center could create competition for volunteers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Concern that donations could be diverted from my organization to the volunteer center	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23. Optional: What other concerns do you have about a regional volunteer center?

24. Optional: Based on your experience, in what ways (if any) would a centralized volunteer center support your organization's volunteer engagement efforts?

Please share any thoughts or examples that come to mind.

25. If a regional volunteer center offered the support mentioned and addressed the concerns you identified, how likely would your organization be to engage with it?

- ☐ Extremely unlikely
- ☐ Somewhat unlikely
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ Somewhat likely
- ☐ Extremely likely

26. When the feasibility study concludes in October 2025, would you like to be informed of its findings? We'll only use your email to share the findings and will not share it with others.

- ☐ Yes – please share the findings with me at this email address: _____
- ☐ No – I do not wish to receive the findings

27. Last question! Any other comments that you'd like to mention about your volunteer engagement, a potential volunteer center, or any other topics we explore in this survey?

Thank you for sharing your insights! Your input will help shape how volunteer support is designed and delivered across Northwest Arkansas.

You'll be entered into a drawing for a \$50 VISA gift card.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact research@crystalbridges.org.

NWA RESIDENT SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

Welcome, and thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

This is a survey to better understand how non-profits in Northwest Arkansas engage residents in volunteer opportunities. There has been interest in forming a regional volunteer center that could support and connect volunteers and their organizations. Your response will help us explore the feasibility of such a center and identify opportunities to build capacity across the nonprofit sector

The survey should take approximately **10-15 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will not be tied to your name or personal information in any way.

As a thank you, you'll be entered into a drawing for one of four **\$25 VISA gift cards**.

The Center for Audience Research & Evaluation (CARE) at Crystal Bridges is conducting this study on behalf of the Jones Center. If you have any questions, please contact research@crystalbridges.org.

Please feel free to share this with friends, neighbors, and anyone in Northwest Arkansas, especially those who aren't currently volunteering. The more voices we hear, the better we can build resources that truly serve our community.

EXPERIENCE WITH VOLUNTEERING

For the purposes of this survey, please focus on volunteering you have done or would like to do in Northwest Arkansas, which includes Benton, Washington, and Madison counties and communities such as Bentonville, Fayetteville, Rogers, Springdale, and nearby areas.

1. In the past 12 months, did you spend any time volunteering for any local organization or association?

- ☐ Yes, regularly
- ☐ Yes, occasionally
- ☐ No, but I'm interested in volunteering
- ☐ No, and I'm not interested in volunteering
- ☐ Don't know

2. Some people don't think of activities they do infrequently or for children's schools or youth organizations as volunteer activities. In the past 12 months, have you done any of these types of activities?

- ☐ Yes, regularly
- ☐ Yes, occasionally
- ☐ No, but I'm interested in volunteering
- ☐ No, and I'm not interested in volunteering
- ☐ Don't know

3. In the past 12 months, how often did you volunteer?

- ☐ Almost every day
- ☐ A few times a week
- ☐ A few times a month
- ☐ About once a month
- ☐ A few times a year
- ☐ Once or twice in the past year
- ☐ Not at all [SKIP TO Q5]

4. In the past 12 months, approximately how many hours did you volunteer in total?

☐ _____

5. How does volunteering currently fit into your life routine?

- ☐ Volunteering is a regular part of my schedule
- ☐ I volunteer occasionally when I have time
- ☐ I'd like to volunteer more but struggle to find time

6. What helps you make time for volunteering? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ I prioritize it like other commitments
- ☐ My workplace or school supports volunteering
- ☐ I volunteer with friends or family
- ☐ The opportunity is flexible and fits my schedule
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

7. What makes it difficult to find time to volunteer? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Work or school responsibilities
- ☐ Caregiving or family duties
- ☐ Lack of flexible volunteer opportunities
- ☐ Transportation or location issues
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

8. In the past 12 months, approximately how many regional organizations did you volunteer with?

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3-4
- ☐ 5 or more

9. In the past 12 months, what types of local organizations did you volunteer with? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Arts, culture, and humanities
- ☐ Community and economic development
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Environment
- ☐ Faith-based
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Human services
- ☐ Sports and recreation
- ☐ Other (please specify)

10. Optional: Please list the specific local organizations you volunteered with over the past 12 months. This could include nonprofits, schools, faith-based groups, mutual aid networks, or other community organizations.

11. In the past 12 months, has your employer provided any support or incentives for volunteering? (This could include things like paid time off to volunteer, matching donations, employer-sponsored volunteer days, or other formal programs.)

- ☐ Arts, culture, and humanities
- ☐ Community and economic development
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Environment

MOTIVATIONS AND BARRIERS

12. What are the top reasons you volunteer? (Select up to 3)

- ☐ Contribute to making my community a better place
- ☐ Build relationships with others in my area
- ☐ Feel more connected to my community
- ☐ Gain skills or experience
- ☐ Support a cause I care about
- ☐ Feel fulfilled or purposeful
- ☐ To advance my career / improve job opportunities
- ☐ Improve my sense of well-being and health
- ☐ Other (please specify)

13. How important is volunteering to your overall well-being or life satisfaction?

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not very important
- ☐ Not at all important

14. How important is volunteering to your sense of belonging in the local community?

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not very important
- ☐ Not at all important

15. Do you feel that your volunteer work is valued by the organization you support?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

16. How much do the following factors influence your decision to volunteer at local organizations? (1 = No influence at all, 3 = Moderate influence, 5 = Very strong influence)

	No influence at all 1	2	Moderate influence 3	4	Very strong influence 5
Receiving rewards/recognition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Having clear descriptions of volunteer activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Living or working near volunteer site	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Building positive relationships with other volunteers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feeling welcomed and included while volunteering	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feeling connected to the community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Finding opportunities that match my skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Believing my contributions make a difference	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Receiving direct invitations to volunteer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being able to balance volunteering with other time commitments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being able to easily sign up for volunteer opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. Optional: Please describe any additional factors that influence your decision to volunteer in Northwest Arkansas.

18. Have you ever stopped volunteering with an organization in Northwest Arkansas? If yes, why?

☐ Yes (please explain): _____

☐ No

FINDING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

19. How do you currently find out about volunteer opportunities? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Organization websites
- ☐ Volunteer platforms (e.g., VolunteerMatch, GivePulse, JoinDeed, Just Serve)
- ☐ Community events
- ☐ Information from my employer
- ☐ Direct invitation from an organization or individual
- ☐ Local website or newsletter (please specify): _____
- ☐ Email lists or newsletters from organizations I follow (please specify): _____
- ☐ Faith-based or religious community announcements
- ☐ Community bulletin boards or flyers
- ☐ School or university
- ☐ Civic or service clubs (e.g., Rotary, Lions)
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- ☐ I am currently unaware of local volunteer opportunities

20. How easy or difficult is it for you to find volunteer opportunities that match your interests?

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult

21. How easy or difficult is it for you to find volunteer opportunities that match your availability?

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult

22. What types of volunteer opportunities are you most interested in? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ One-time events
- ☐ Ongoing roles
- ☐ Virtual opportunities
- ☐ Group volunteering
- ☐ Opportunities for families
- ☐ Board roles
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

23. What would help you find volunteer opportunities that are a good fit for you? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ A centralized website or app listing opportunities
- ☐ Personalized recommendations based on my interests and skills
- ☐ Clear descriptions of roles, expectations, and time commitments
- ☐ A way to filter opportunities by location, schedule, or type
- ☐ Notifications or updates about new opportunities
- ☐ Support from someone to help me get started (e.g., volunteer coordinator, peer guide)
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

SUSTAINING VOLUNTEERISM

24. What would have the biggest impact on your decision to volunteer in Northwest Arkansas in the future? (Select up to 3)

- ☐ More flexible volunteer opportunities (e.g., virtual, short-term, or one-time events)
- ☐ More opportunities outside the workday (e.g., evenings, weekends)
- ☐ Paid time off or support from my employer (e.g., opportunities to volunteer during the workday)
- ☐ Childcare or family-friendly volunteer options
- ☐ Better transportation options or volunteer opportunities that are closer to me
- ☐ Clearer information about how to get involved / more details about available opportunities
- ☐ Opportunities that match my skills or interests
- ☐ Opportunities to volunteer with friends
- ☐ Opportunities that align with my faith or values
- ☐ A more inclusive and welcoming environment for all volunteers
- ☐ Opportunities that help me feel more connected to my community
- ☐ Training and skill development opportunities for volunteers
- ☐ Recognition or appreciation for my contributions

25. Optional: Please describe anything else that would make you more likely to volunteer in Northwest Arkansas.

26. Optional: Any other comments that you'd like to mention about volunteering or community involvement in Northwest Arkansas?

DEMOGRAPHICS

Thank you for sharing your experiences. The following questions are optional and help us understand how different residents experience volunteering and civic engagement in Northwest Arkansas. Your responses will allow us to compare perspectives across groups and ensure that future efforts are inclusive and responsive to community needs.

You may skip any question you prefer not to answer.

27. What is your age?

28. How long have you lived in Northwest Arkansas?

- ☐ All my life
- ☐ More than 20 years, but not all my life
- ☐ 11-20 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ Less than 1 year

29. What is your US ZIP code?

30. With which racial or ethnic group(s) do you identify? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian or Asian American
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latinx
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

31. What is your gender?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Non-binary/third gender
- ☐ Prefer to self-identify
- ☐ Prefer not to say

32. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ Some high school or less
- ☐ High school degree/GED equivalent
- ☐ Some college/vocational program
- ☐ Associate degree (2-year program)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree (4-year program)
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctoral or professional degree
- ☐ Prefer not to say

33. Which best describes your employment status over the last three months?

- ☐ Employed full-time
- ☐ Employed part-time
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Unemployed and looking for work
- ☐ Unemployed and not looking for work
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

34. What is your yearly household income?

- ☐ Less than \$25,000
- ☐ \$25,000 - \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 - \$74,999
- ☐ \$75,000 - \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 - \$149,999
- ☐ \$150,000 - \$199,999
- ☐ \$200,000 - \$249,999
- ☐ \$250,000 - \$299,999
- ☐ \$300,000 or more
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to say

35. Are there children under 18 living in your household?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes - how many? _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

36. Would you like to enter the drawing for one of four \$25 VISA gift cards? If so, please share your email address below. Your email will only be used for the purpose of this drawing and will not be shared or used for any other reason.

☐ _____

Thank you for sharing your insights! Your input will help shape how volunteer support is designed and delivered across Northwest Arkansas.

You'll be entered into a drawing for a \$25 VISA gift card.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact research@crystalbridges.org.

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CONTACT US

CENTER FOR AUDIENCE RESEARCH AND EVALUATION (CARE)

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art
600 Museum Way,
Bentonville, AR 72712



research@crystalbridges.org



www.crystalbridges.org/CARE